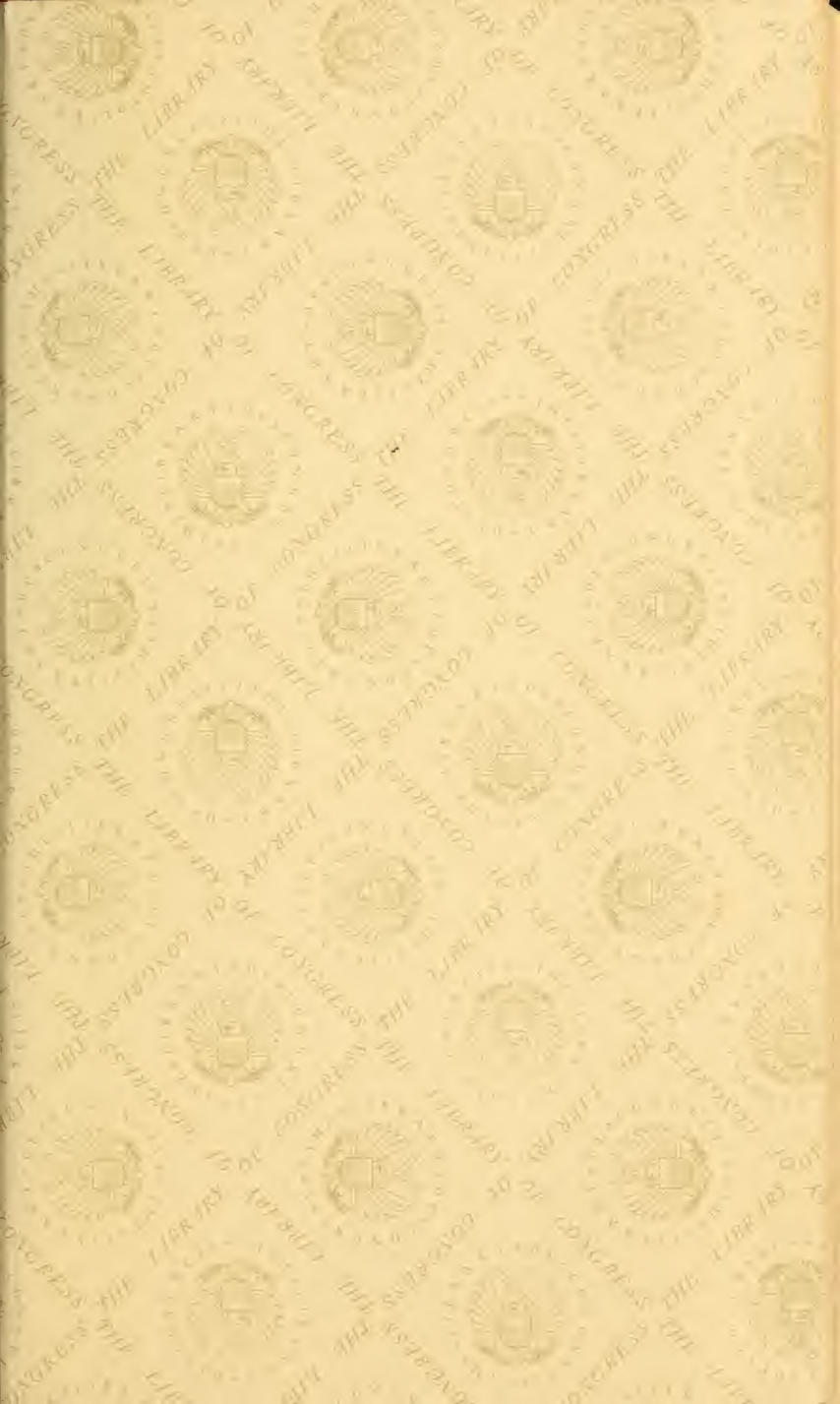


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The Fairy Queen



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Retold by Calvin Dill Wilson
Decorated by Ralph Fletcher Seymour

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fights the **D**ragon

Old Tales Retold for Young
Readers

The Fairy Queen

First Book

Rewritten in Simple Language

By

CALVIN DILL WILSON

Author of "The Story of the Cid," "The Child's
Don Quixote," Etc.

Decorated by Ralph Fletcher Seymour



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Inscribed
To My Young Cousin
Julian Sears



FOREWORD

“THE FAERY QUEEN,” by Edmund Spenser, who was born in London in 1552, is one of the most splendid long poems in the English language. It is also a wonderfully interesting story-book, containing all sorts of adventures. But not many children are likely to read this long poem in its original form. I have therefore taken the first story and told it in prose, that young readers may have the tale in such shape as may please them. It would have gratified me to tell the whole set of tales in this way, but this course would have made a larger book than you would care for, perhaps.

The author of this poem intended that it should be understood as an allegory, that is, a story with a double meaning. His knights and ladies, and their adventures, are meant to be images of human life. But as young people are usually interested more in a story than in its meaning, we have not given an explanation of the allegory, believing that the story in itself is sufficiently pleasing, and that readers can find out something of the meaning without help.



The book introduces us to the world of the fairies. We meet here the great queen Gloriana, who reigned over Fairyland; we meet here St. George and the Dragon. All our lives long we shall find in our reading references to the famous scenes and people told of in this book. So we hope you may like the tale.

C. D. W.

Glendale, Ohio, July 1, 1906.



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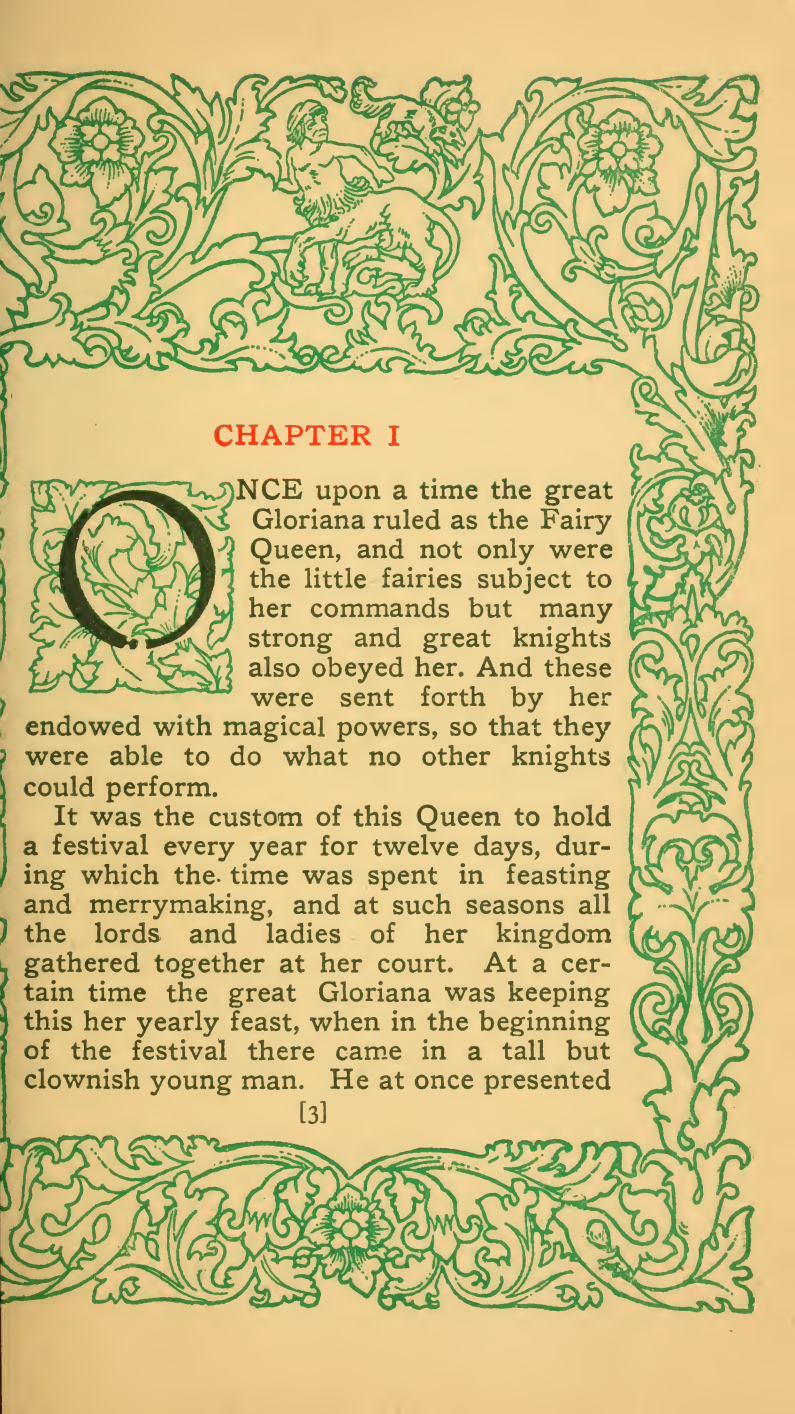


CHAPTER I.

GLORIANA, THE FAIRY QUEEN.—HER
YEARLY FEAST.—THE AWKWARD YOUTH
AND HIS REQUEST.—THE LADY WHOSE
PARENTS WERE SHUT UP BY A DRAGON.







CHAPTER I

ONCE upon a time the great Gloriana ruled as the Fairy Queen, and not only were the little fairies subject to her commands but many strong and great knights also obeyed her. And these were sent forth by her endowed with magical powers, so that they were able to do what no other knights could perform.

It was the custom of this Queen to hold a festival every year for twelve days, during which the time was spent in feasting and merrymaking, and at such seasons all the lords and ladies of her kingdom gathered together at her court. At a certain time the great Gloriana was keeping this her yearly feast, when in the beginning of the festival there came in a tall but clownish young man. He at once presented

THE FAERY QUEEN

himself before the Queen of Fairies, and desired a favor at her hands. It was the custom then that during the feast she could not refuse a request that was in itself fair and right.

And what do you think this youth asked for himself? Was it money or power? No, it was such a thing as in those days brave men considered to be the greatest privilege they could obtain. He requested that he might have the chance to perform a brave deed. He wished that he might be chosen for the accomplishment of the first adventure that might happen during that feast. This youth seemed to the Queen to be but a raw and awkward young man, and by no means the most promising of the men present to whom to give such an opportunity, but she could not refuse. Therefore she granted his desire.

This youth was much gratified by her reply, and then rested himself upon the floor, since he on account of his rude appearance did not seem to be suited for any better place.

Soon afterward, there entered a fair Lady, dressed in black garments, riding upon a white ass. Behind her came a Dwarf leading a warlike steed, that bore

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the arms of a knight, and his spear was in the Dwarf's hands. This Lady, falling before the Queen of Fairies, complained that her father and mother, who were an ancient king and queen, had been shut up for many years in their brazen castle, by a huge Dragon that lay before their gates and would allow no one to enter in nor to come out of that palace. She said that many knights had come from various parts of the world to slay the Dragon, but they had all failed and lost their lives. They had been attracted thither by the desire to do a great deed, and also by the reward which her father offered, for he had proclaimed throughout the world that he would make the man who would kill the monster heir to his kingdom, and he would give him the hand of his daughter, Una, who was this Lady herself.

She said that since so many men had failed in this attempt she had now come to the Queen of the Fairies, having learned that her knights were much abler to perform wonderful deeds than were any other men. She therefore asked Gloriana to appoint one of her knights to take upon himself the adventure of setting her parents free by slaying the Dragon.

The awkward youth, who had received

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Gloriana's promise that he should have the privilege of the first adventure that offered, heard this conversation, and at once started up, desiring that he might undertake this deed. Whereat the Queen wondered much and the Lady hesitated, seeing his youth and awkwardness; but he earnestly urged his request. In the end, the Lady told him that unless the armor which her Dwarf had borne thither, upon the riderless steed, would perfectly fit him, he could not succeed in the enterprise.

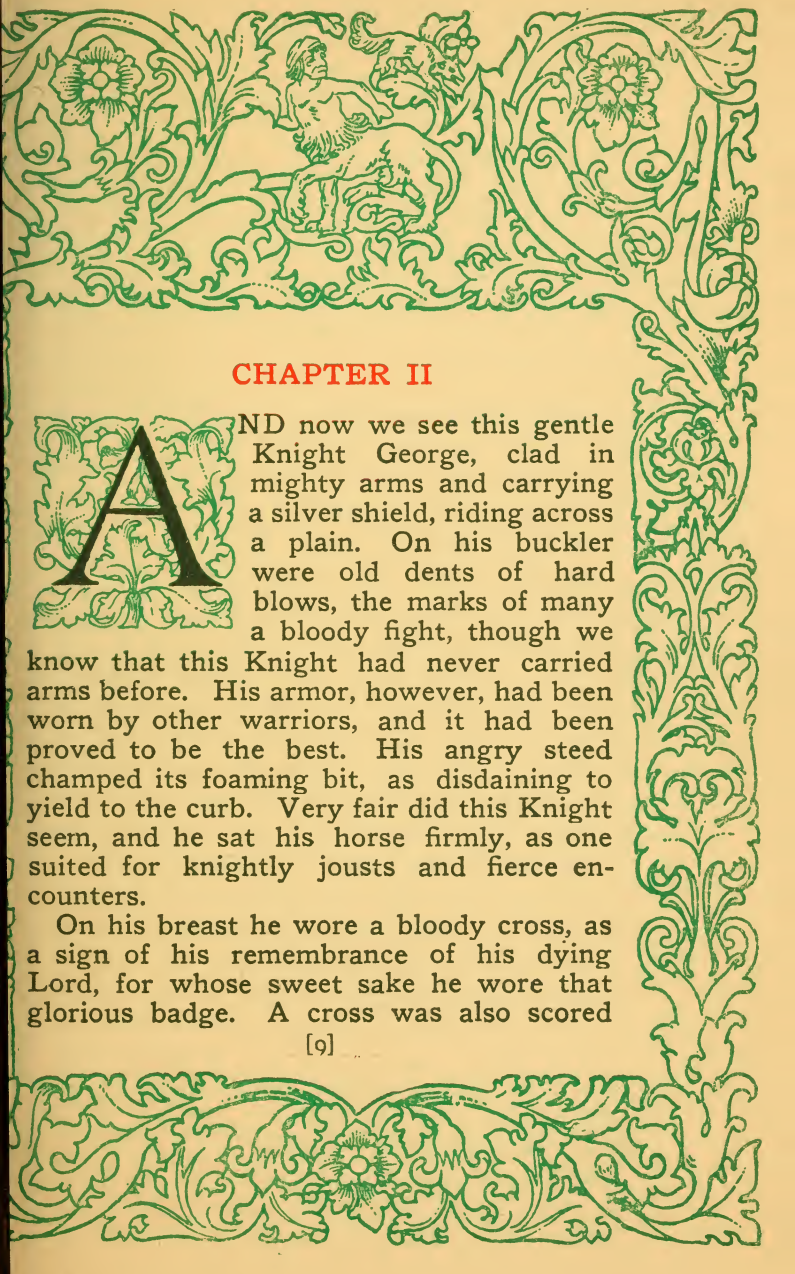
When the armor was tried upon the youth, it was found to be as if it had been made for him. And when his form was covered with that noble mail he seemed to be the goodliest man in all that company, and as the Lady looked upon him thus changed she liked him well, and her heart went out to him. Then this youth, whose name was George, took the oath of knight-hood, and mounting upon that strange courser, he went forth with the Lady Una upon that adventure. But before he went away George promised the Queen that if he should succeed in killing the Dragon, he would return to her court and enter for six years as a knight into her wars with the heathens.

CHAPTER II.

THE REDCROSS KNIGHT AND UNA ON THEIR JOURNEY.—THEY ENTER THE WANDERING WOOD.—ERROR'S DEN.—GEORGE SLAYS A DREADFUL BEAST.—THEY LODGE AT NIGHT WITH AN OLD MAN WHO PROVES TO BE A MAGICIAN.—THE MAGICIAN ARCHIMAGO DECEIVES THE KNIGHT BY A DREAM.—GEORGE BELIEVES UNA TO BE A WICKED WOMAN.







CHAPTER II

AND now we see this gentle Knight George, clad in mighty arms and carrying a silver shield, riding across a plain. On his buckler were old dents of hard blows, the marks of many a bloody fight, though we know that this Knight had never carried arms before. His armor, however, had been worn by other warriors, and it had been proved to be the best. His angry steed champed its foaming bit, as disdaining to yield to the curb. Very fair did this Knight seem, and he sat his horse firmly, as one suited for knightly jousts and fierce encounters.

On his breast he wore a bloody cross, as a sign of his remembrance of his dying Lord, for whose sweet sake he wore that glorious badge. A cross was also scored

THE FAERY QUEEN

upon his shield, for he had his chief hope in the help of Christ; and for this reason he came to be called George, the Redcross Knight. As he rode his countenance seemed too sad, yet it was not so through fear, for he dreaded nothing, but was rather feared by others.

During his journey thus far, he had come to admire and love greatly the Lady Una, and he desired above all things to win honor and have her favor. His heart was also filled with yearning to prove his power in brave battle upon his foe, that horrible and stern Dragon that imprisoned the parents of his Lady.

The lovely Lady Una rode fairly beside him, upon a lowly ass that was whiter than snow, and yet not so white as she; but she hid her beauty under a veil that was folded low, and over all she had thrown a black cloak. She looked sad as one that inwardly mourned, and she sat heavily upon her slow palfrey. She seemed to have in her heart some hidden care. And by her side she led with a line a milk-white lamb, and she was as pure and innocent in her life as that same lamb.

Behind her, far away, lagged her Dwarf, who seemed lazy, being always last, and

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being wearied with bearing her bag of goods at his back.

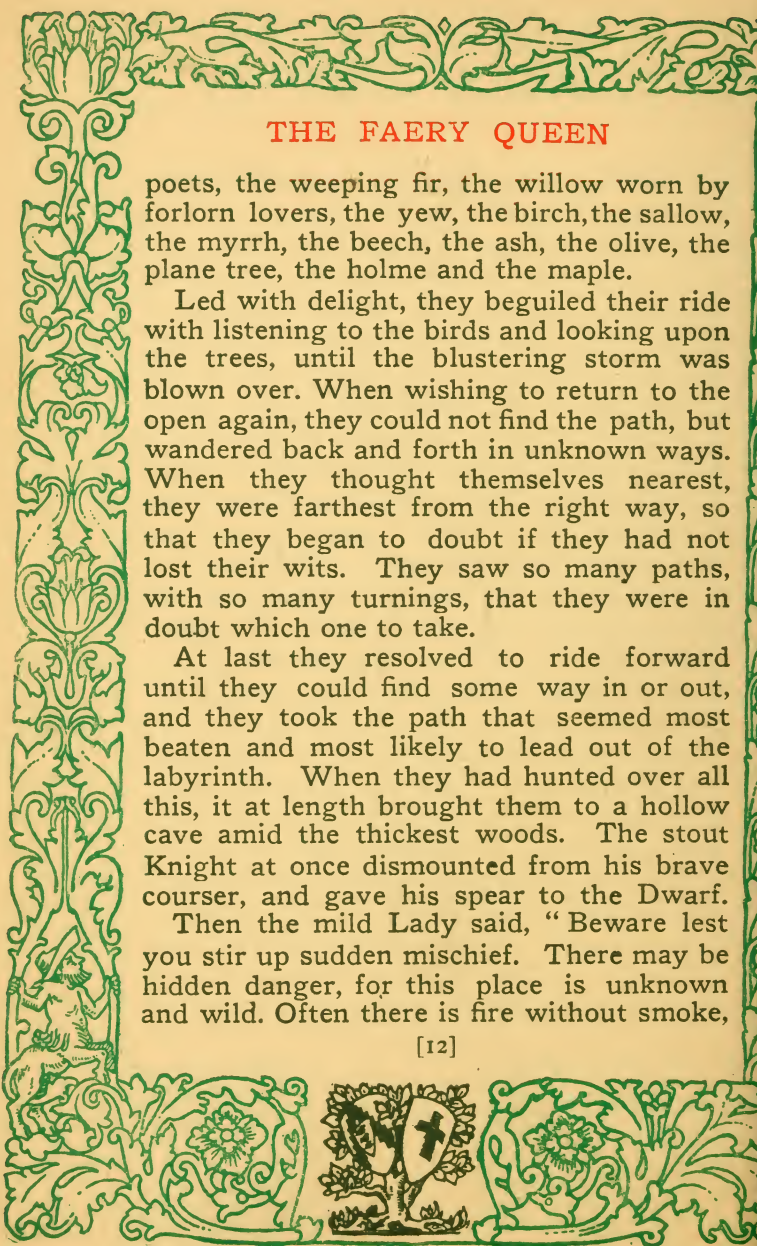
As they rode on, the day was suddenly overcast with clouds, and an angry, hideous storm of rain was poured down fast upon the earth, so that every one was constrained to hurry to cover; and this fair couple also were fain to shelter themselves.

Driven to seek some hiding place near at hand from the storm, they spied a shady grove not far away that promised them help to withstand the tempest. There lofty trees, clad with leaves, the pride of summer, spread so broad that they hid heaven's light and could not be pierced by the power of any star. Within were paths and wide alleys with worn footpaths that led far inward. These promised a fair haven; so they entered.

With pleasure they went forward, rejoicing to hear the birds' sweet harmony, which, there protected from the dread tempest, seemed in their song to scorn the cruel sky. Much they praised the straight high trees, the soaring pine, the proud, tall cedar, the vine-prop elm, the green poplar, the oak that is king of the forests, the aspen good for staves, the funeral cypress, the laurel, the reward of conquerors and sage

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THE FAERY QUEEN

poets, the weeping fir, the willow worn by forlorn lovers, the yew, the birch, the sallow, the myrrh, the beech, the ash, the olive, the plane tree, the holme and the maple.

Led with delight, they beguiled their ride with listening to the birds and looking upon the trees, until the blustering storm was blown over. When wishing to return to the open again, they could not find the path, but wandered back and forth in unknown ways. When they thought themselves nearest, they were farthest from the right way, so that they began to doubt if they had not lost their wits. They saw so many paths, with so many turnings, that they were in doubt which one to take.

At last they resolved to ride forward until they could find some way in or out, and they took the path that seemed most beaten and most likely to lead out of the labyrinth. When they had hunted over all this, it at length brought them to a hollow cave amid the thickest woods. The stout Knight at once dismounted from his brave courser, and gave his spear to the Dwarf.

Then the mild Lady said, "Beware lest you stir up sudden mischief. There may be hidden danger, for this place is unknown and wild. Often there is fire without smoke,

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and peril without signs of it. Therefore, Sir Knight, wait till you have made further trial."

"Ah, Lady," said he, "it would be shameful to cease to go forward because of hidden shadows. Virtue gives herself light to wade through darkness."

"Yes, but," said she, "I know the peril of this place better than do you. Though you think it is now too late to return back without disgrace to you as a Knight, yet wisdom warns you, while you are at the entrance to the cave, to stay your steps before you are forced to retreat, for this is the Wandering Wood, and this is Error's Den, a vile monster who is hated by God and man. Therefore, I say, beware."

"Fly, fly," said the timid Dwarf, "this is no place for living men."

But the youthful Knight was so full of fire and courage that he could not be stopped, but went forth into the dark hole and looked in. His glistening armor made a little gloomy light, by which he saw plainly the ugly monster, that was half like a serpent and the other half had a woman's shape, and all was most loathsome, filthy, and foul. And as she lay upon the ground, her huge, long tail spread over all her den,



THE FAERY QUEEN

yet was wound up in knots and many folds, and pointed with a deadly sting.

The monster started up frightened, and rushed forth, hurling her hideous tail about her cursed head. Its folds were now stretched forth at length without twistings. She looked about, and seeing a man armed in iron mail sought to turn back again, for she hated light as a deadly thing.

Which when the valiant knight saw, he leaped as fiercely as a lion upon his fleeing foe, and with his sharp sword he boldly kept her from turning back, and forced her to stay. Enraged at this, she began to roar loudly, and fiercely turning, thrust forward her speckled tail, threatening her angry sting to dismay him. But he, nothing terrified, raised up his mighty hand, and the stroke of his sword glanced from her head to her shoulder.

Her senses were dazed with that blow, yet her rage kindled, and she gathered herself up and all at once raised her beastly body high above the ground. Then she leaped fierce upon his shield, and suddenly wound her huge length around his body, so that he tried in vain to stir hand or foot. His Lady, sad at seeing his sore plight, cried, "Now, now, Sir Knight, show what

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THE FAERY QUEEN

you are. Add faith to your force, and be not faint. Strangle her, or she surely will strangle you."

When he heard this, he was in great perplexity, and was filled with grief and disdain. Then striving with all his force he got one hand free, and with this he gripped her throat with such a strength that soon he compelled her to loose her wicked bands. Then she cast forth from her foul mouth a horrible poison, which smelled so vilely that it forced him to slacken his hold and to turn away from her. The Knight was well nigh choked by the deadly smell, so that he could not fight for a moment.

The Knight at last feeling more the shame than the peril of his plight, came furiously upon his foe, resolved to win suddenly or quickly to lose before he would give up the battle. He then struck at her with more than human force, so that he hewed her hateful head from her body. Then a stream of coal-black blood gushed from her corpse.

His Lady seeing from afar all that had happened, approached in haste to praise his victory, and said, "Fair Knight, born under a happy star, who now see your vanquished foe lie before you, you are well worthy of

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that armor wherein you have won great glory this day and proved your strength on a strong enemy in your first adventure. Many such adventures I pray for you, and ever wish that they may succeed like this one."

Then he mounted upon his steed again and sought to go thence with his Lady. He kept that path which was most beaten, nor would go aside to any byway, and by following this path to the end it at last brought them out of the wood. So forward on his way, with God as his friend, he passed forth and sought new adventures. But he travelled a long way before anything more happened to him.

At length they chanced to meet upon the way an aged man, who was clad in long black clothes, with bare feet, and with beard hoary gray. He had his book hanging by his belt, and seemed sober and sad as a sage. His eyes were bent low upon the ground, and he seemed to be a simple man, without any malice. As he went he prayed all the way, and often knocked upon his breast as one that repented of his sins.

He greeted the Knight fairly, bowing low, and he as a courteous man returned the salute, and afterward asked him if he



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knew of any strange adventures that had been taking place. "Ah, my dear," said he, "how should a silly old man, who lives in a hidden cell, counting his beads all day for his sins, know tidings of wars and worldly troubles? It does not fit a holy father to meddle with such things. But if you desire to hear of danger near at home, I can tell you tidings of a strange man that wastes this country far and near."

"Of such," said the Knight, "I chiefly inquire, and shall reward you well to show the place in which that wicked wight spends his days. For to all knighthood it is a foul disgrace that such a cursed creature lives so long."

"His dwelling," said he, "is far hence, in a vast wilderness, where no living man may ever pass without great sorrows."

"Now," said the Lady, "it draws toward night, and well I know that you are wearied by your great toil. For who is so strong but lacking rest he will also lack strength? Then with the Sun take your timely rest, and with the new day begin at once new work. An untroubled night, they say gives best counsel."

"Right well, Sir Knight, you are advised," said then that aged man. "Now



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the day is spent. Therefore with me you may take up your lodging for this night."

The Knight was well content, so they went with that godly father to his home. It was a little lowly hermitage, down in a dale, close to the side of a forest, far from the road where people passed to and fro in travel. Near it there was built a holy chapel, wherein the hermit was used to say his holy prayers, each morning and evening. There a crystal stream gently played, which welled forth from a sacred fountain.

When they had arrived, they filled the little house, it was so small, nor did they look for fine entertainment where it could not be given. Rest was their feast, and doing as they wished. The noblest mind has the best contentment. They passed the evening with pleasant discourse; for that old man had a store of pleasing words, and could file his tongue as smooth as glass. He told of Saints and Popes, and strewed his prayers through his talk.

The drooping night crept fast upon them. Their eyelids grew heavy, bidding them to sleep. The old man then led them to their couches, and when he saw them lost in sleep he went to his study. There amid books of magic and various arts, he sought



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out mighty charms to trouble sleepy minds. By his horrible spells he called up hundreds of Sprites, which fluttered about his head like little flies waiting to do whatever service he bade them, to assist his friends or slay his enemies. Of these he chose out a pair, the falsest ones and fittest to forge lies that seemed true. To one of these he gave a message to bear for him, and the other stayed by his side to do other work.

The one sped through the air, and through the ocean, and hastily repaired to the house of Morpheus, the god of sleep. His dwelling is in the bowels of the earth, where the dawning day never peeps. There he found the double gates locked fast; the one was framed of burnished ivory, and the other all covered with silver. Before them lay wakeful dogs watching to banish Care, which is wont to trouble gentle sleep. The Sprite passed quietly by these, and came to Morpheus, whom he found drowned in drowsiness; for he takes no care for anything. To lull Morpheus in his soft slumber, there is there a trickling stream that tumbles down from a high rock. Rain always drizzles on the roof, mixed with a murmuring wind, much like the sound of bees. No other noise, nor the troublous

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THE FAERY QUEEN

cries of people might there be heard. There careless Quiet lies wrapped in eternal silence, far from foes.

This Messenger, approaching, spoke to him, but his words were wasted; he slept so sound that nothing could awaken him. Then he struck him rudely, causing him pain, whereat he began to stretch himself. He again shook him so hard that he forced him to speak, and he mumbled softly as one in a dream. The Sprite then began more boldly to awaken him, and threatened him with the dreadful name of Hecate. At this he began to quake, and lifting up his lumpish head half angrily asked him for what he came.

"I was sent here," said the Sprite, "by Archimago, he that can tame stubborn Sprites. He bids you to send him a false dream that can deceive sleepers."

This command Morpheus obeyed, and calling forth at once a Dream out of his dark prison, delivered it to him, and then again laid down his heavy head, whose senses were at once benumbed.

The Sprite, returning by the ivory door, remounted to the air cheerful as a lark, and bore the Dream upon his little wings in haste to his master.



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This old man, who was really the great magician Archimago, meanwhile had made a Lady of the other Sprite, and framed her of air, so beautiful and so like Una that Archimago himself was almost deceived at the sight. He clad her all in white and cast over her a black garment like that of Una. Then he sent that idle Dream to the Knight where he slept soundly, void of evil thought. And when he dreamed awhile he awoke and found this Sprite in his room. And then that evil Sprite told him that Una, who he thought was speaking to him, was a wicked woman, and unworthy of his devotion and his service.

He was much dismayed at this strange news, but he could not doubt since it seemed to be Una herself who spoke. And when she was gone, he lay a long time musing and much grieved that this gentle dame was an evil person, for whose defence he was to shed his blood. At last, dull with weariness from his fight, he fell asleep, but troublous dreams still tossed his brain.

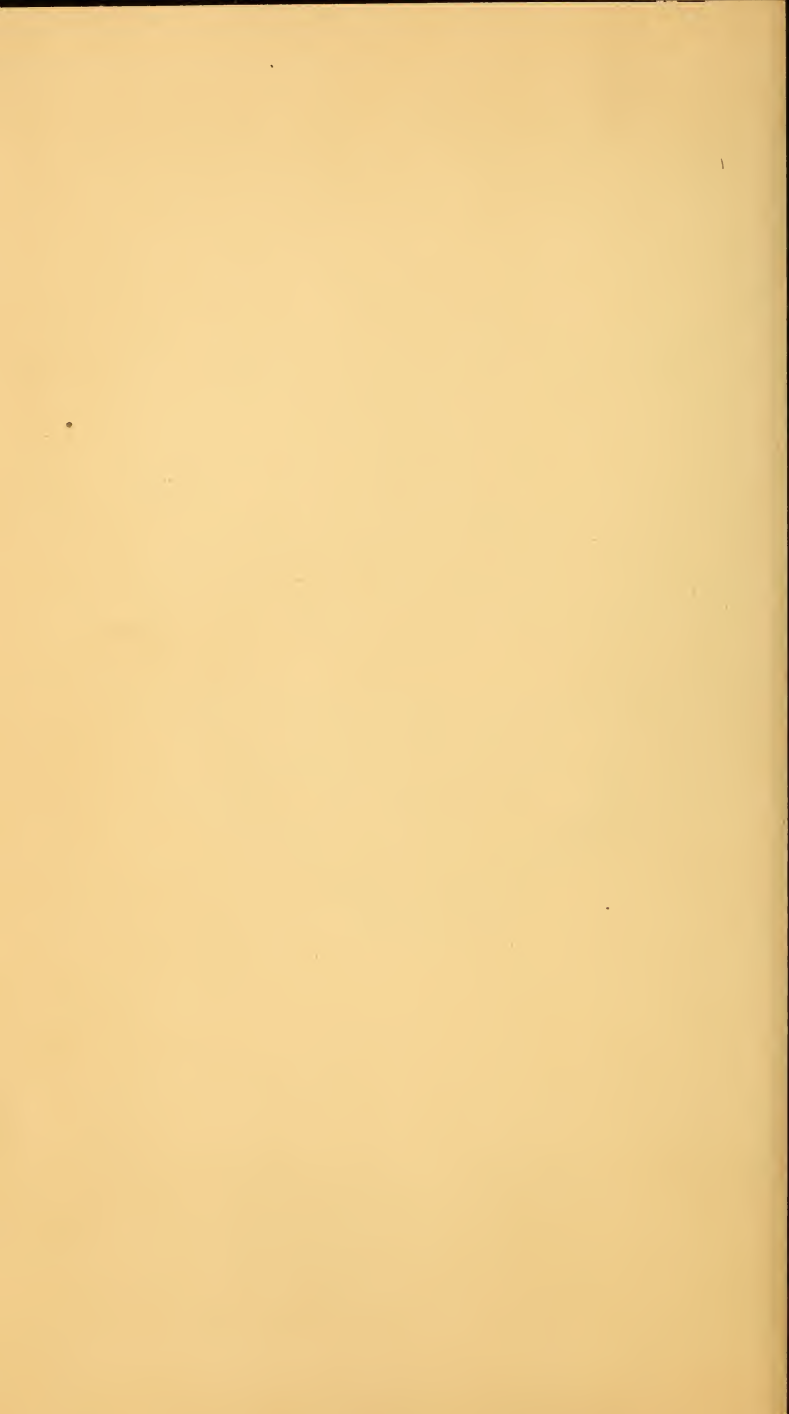


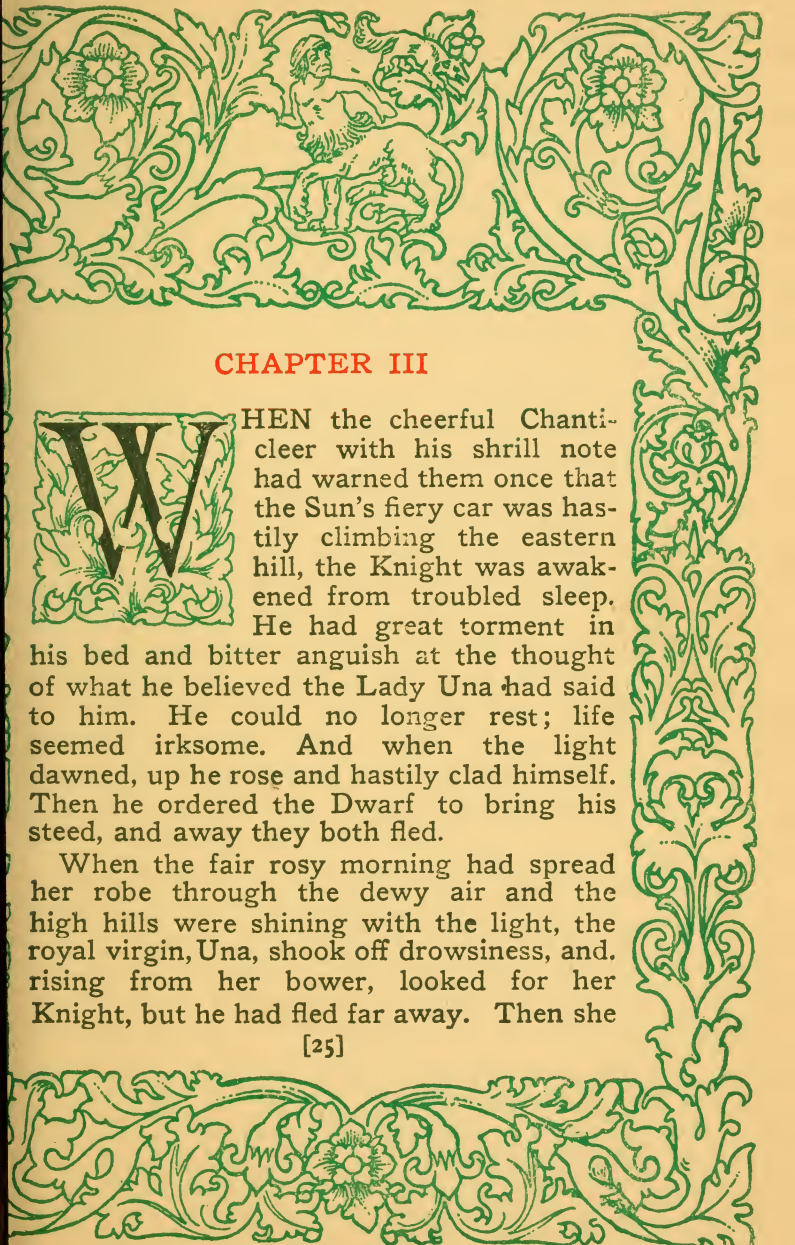


CHAPTER III.

THE REDCROSS KNIGHT, BELIEVING UNA TO BE WICKED, FORSAKES HER.—UNA GOES IN SEARCH OF HER KNIGHT.—ARCHIMAGO DISGUISES HIMSELF AS THE REDCROSS KNIGHT.—THE REAL ST. GEORGE FIGHTS WITH THE SARACEN SANSFOY.—A FALSE WITCH (DUESSA) DECEIVES ST. GEORGE.—THE MAN AND WOMAN WHO WERE CHANGED INTO TREES.







CHAPTER III

WHEN the cheerful Chanticleer with his shrill note had warned them once that the Sun's fiery car was hastily climbing the eastern hill, the Knight was awakened from troubled sleep. He had great torment in his bed and bitter anguish at the thought of what he believed the Lady Una had said to him. He could no longer rest; life seemed irksome. And when the light dawned, up he rose and hastily clad himself. Then he ordered the Dwarf to bring his steed, and away they both fled.

When the fair rosy morning had spread her robe through the dewy air and the high hills were shining with the light, the royal virgin, Una, shook off drowsiness, and, rising from her bower, looked for her Knight, but he had fled far away. Then she

THE FAERY QUEEN

searched for her Dwarf, but he, too, was gone. And then she began to wail and weep at her peril. Mounting her palfrey, she rode after him, with as much speed as her slow beast could make. But it was all in vain, for the Knight's light-footed steed had borne him so far, spurred by this angry and disdainful man, that it was but fruitless for her to follow.

Yet she would never rest her weary limbs, but searched every hill and dale, wood and plain, grieving in her gentle breast that he whom she so loved had left her so ungently.

But the subtle Archimago, when he saw his guests thus separated and Una wandering in forests and woods, praised his own fiendish art, that had such power over true meaning hearts. Yet he did not rest, but devised other means to cause Una further pain. For he hated her as a hissing snake and took most pleasure in her many troubles.

He then planned how to disguise himself, for by his mighty art he could take many forms and shapes, sometimes like a fowl, sometimes like a fish, now like a fox, now like a dragon, so that he would often quake with fear of himself. Who can tell the power of Magic?

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THE FAERY QUEEN

But it now seemed to him best to put on the appearance of that good Knight who had been his guest. At once he clad himself with mighty arms, and a silver shield. Upon his cowardly breast he had a bloody cross. He seemed like a fair knight, and of good address. When he sat upon his free courser, you would have thought it was St. George himself.

But he whose semblance he bore, the true St. George, had wandered far away, still flying from his thoughts and fears. At last, however, the real St. George chanced to meet upon the way a faithless Saracen, all armed, upon whose great shield was written with gay letters, *Sansfoy*, which means, without faith. He was large in limbs and joints, and cared not for God nor man. This Saracen had as a fair companion of his way a goodly Lady, clad in scarlet embroidered with gold and pearls. On her head she wore a Persian mitre decorated with jewels, which her lovers had given her. Her palfrey was covered with tinsel trappings and her bridle rang with golden bells. She entertained this Saracen with mirth and dalliance on the way.

But when she saw St. George advance his spear, she left off her mirth and bade

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THE FAERY QUEEN

her knight prepare for battle, as a foe was coming. The Saracen, stirred with hope to win his Lady's heart, spurred forth fast. Down his courser's side the red blood trickled and stained the ground as he rode.

The Knight of the Redcross, when he spied him spurring so hotly, couched his spear and rode toward him. Soon they both met furiously so that their steeds staggered and stood amazed. Also the knights themselves were stunned with the strokes of their own hands, and recoiled from each other. There they stood unmoved as rocks, staring fiercely, holding idly their broken spears. The Saracen then snatched his sword and fiercely flew upon his enemy, who warded it well and gave him blow for blow. Each envies the other's equal power, and they seek to pierce through their iron sides. They yield no foot. The flashing fire flies, as from a forge. Streams of purple blood color the green fields.

"A curse on that Cross," then cried the Saracen, "that keeps your body safe. I know you would have been dead long ago, had not that Cross been a charm. But yet I warn you to hide your head." Thereupon he smote upon his crest with such force that he hewed a large piece out of his hel-



THE FAERY QUEEN

met. St. George, wondrously wroth, soon revived the sleeping spark of his strength, and, aiming at the haughty helmet of the Saracen, struck so furiously that his sword cut through the steel and clove his head. He tumbled down, kissing his mother earth with bloody mouth. His spirit strove with the frail flesh, and at last flitted away.

The Lady in scarlet, when she saw her champion fall like the old ruins of a broken tower, stayed not to weep for him but fled away with all her might. The Knight scoured hastily after her, bidding the Dwarf bring away the Saracen's shield, as a sign of his victory, and soon he overtook her, bidding her to stop, as there was no present cause for fear.

She turned back with sad face, crying, "Mercy, mercy, Sir, show to a silly dame subject to hard mischance and to your mighty will."

Her humble manner, her rich garments, and glorious appearance, much moved his stout, heroic soul, and he said, "Dear Dame, your sudden overthrow stirs my pity. But now put fear aside and tell who you are, and who he was that took your part."

Then she melted in tears and began to lament thus: "The wretched woman, whom

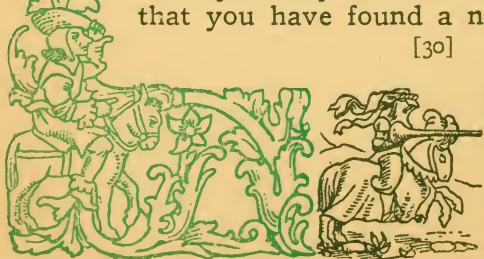


THE FAERY QUEEN

an unhappy hour has made your slave, before false fortune betrayed me, was the only daughter of an Emperor who had the wide West under his rule and had his throne on the Tiber. He in my fresh youth betrothed me to the only heir of a most mighty king, rich and wise. There was never a Prince so faithful and so fair or so meek; but before the day of my marriage shone, my dearest lord fell into the hands of his accursed foes, and was cruelly slain. His blessed body was afterward hidden from me, and in my great sorrow I went forth to find his woeful corpse. Many years I strayed throughout the world, languishing with a wounded mind.

“At last it chanced that this proud Saracen met me wandering, and he led me away by force, but he could never win my love. Now he lies dead with foul dishonor. In this sad plight, friendless and unfortunate, now miserable I, Fidessa, dwell craving of you in pity to do me no ill.”

St. George was much stirred by this tale, keeping his eyes busy viewing her face, and said, “Fair lady, a heart of flint would pity your undeserved woes and sorrows. Henceforth you may rest in the safe assurance that you have found a new friend to aid



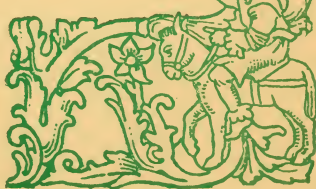
THE FAERY QUEEN

you, and lost an old foe that molested you."

That seemingly simple maid now let her eyes fall modestly to the earth, and, accepting his friendship, they rode forth. A long time they thus travelled together, until, weary of their journey, they came at last to a place where two goodly trees grew, that spread their arms abroad, covered with moss; their green leaves trembling with every breeze made a calm shadow far around. This good Knight, as soon as he spied them, rode hastily thither for the cool shade, for the Sun that day hurled his scorching beams so cruelly hot that no living creature could abide them. There they alighted to hide themselves from the fierce heat and to rest their weary limbs.

There as they sit, he in his deceived fancy takes her to be the fairest woman that ever lived. And to express this thought he uses his gentle wit. And, thinking to form a garland for her dainty forehead, from the green branches he plucked a bough. But out of the broken branch there came small drops of blood that trickled down, and therewith a piteous voice was heard, crying, "Oh, spare with guilty hands to tear my tender sides imprisoned in this rough bark.

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But fly, oh, fly far hence lest that happen to you that did to me and to this wretched lady, my dear love." Astonished, the Knight stood, and could not move a limb for horror. At last his manhood awoke, and doubting his own senses he said, "What voice of a lost spirit, or wicked sprite wandering in the empty air, sends to my doubting ears these cries and bids me spare guiltless blood?"

Then the tree groaned deeply and said, "Not these, but once a man, Fradubio, now a tree. Wretched man, wretched tree, whose weak nature a cruel witch has thus changed, and placed in the open fields, where the winter winds blow bitter and bleak, and the scorching sun dries my veins. For though I seem to be a tree, yet cold and heat pain me."

"Say on, Fradubio, then, man or tree," said the Knight, "by whose mischievous arts you are misshaped thus. He often finds medicine who tells his grief."

"The author, then," said he, "of all my woe is one Duessa, a false sorceress who has brought many knights to misery. In the prime of my years when hot courage was first kindled in my breast by the fire of love and the joy of chivalry, it was my



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lot to love this gentle lady whom you see beside me as a tree. Once, accompanied by her, I chanced to be met by a knight who had a like fair Lady by his side, or she was like a fair Lady, but it was the foul Duessa. This knight took in hand to claim that her beauty far exceeded that of all other dames. I in defence of mine likewise stood, mine that did then shine as the morning star. So we both arranged for fierce battle, and it was his harder fortune to fall under my spear. His Lady, as my prize of war, yielded herself to obey my commands. These ladies were both so fair that one day I wished to compare and find which exceeded in glorious beauty, and a garland of roses was to be the prize. At the contest both seemed to win, so hard was it to decide. Fraelissa was as fair as fair could be, and the false Duessa seemed likewise as fair.. The wicked witch, seeing how doubtful was the balance, cast about to win by guile what she could not get by right, and by her magic she raised a foggy mist that overcast the day, and a dull blast that breathed on my Lady's face, dimming her beauty and making her seem ugly. Then was Duessa fair alone. Then she cried out, 'Fie. deformed wight, whose borrowed



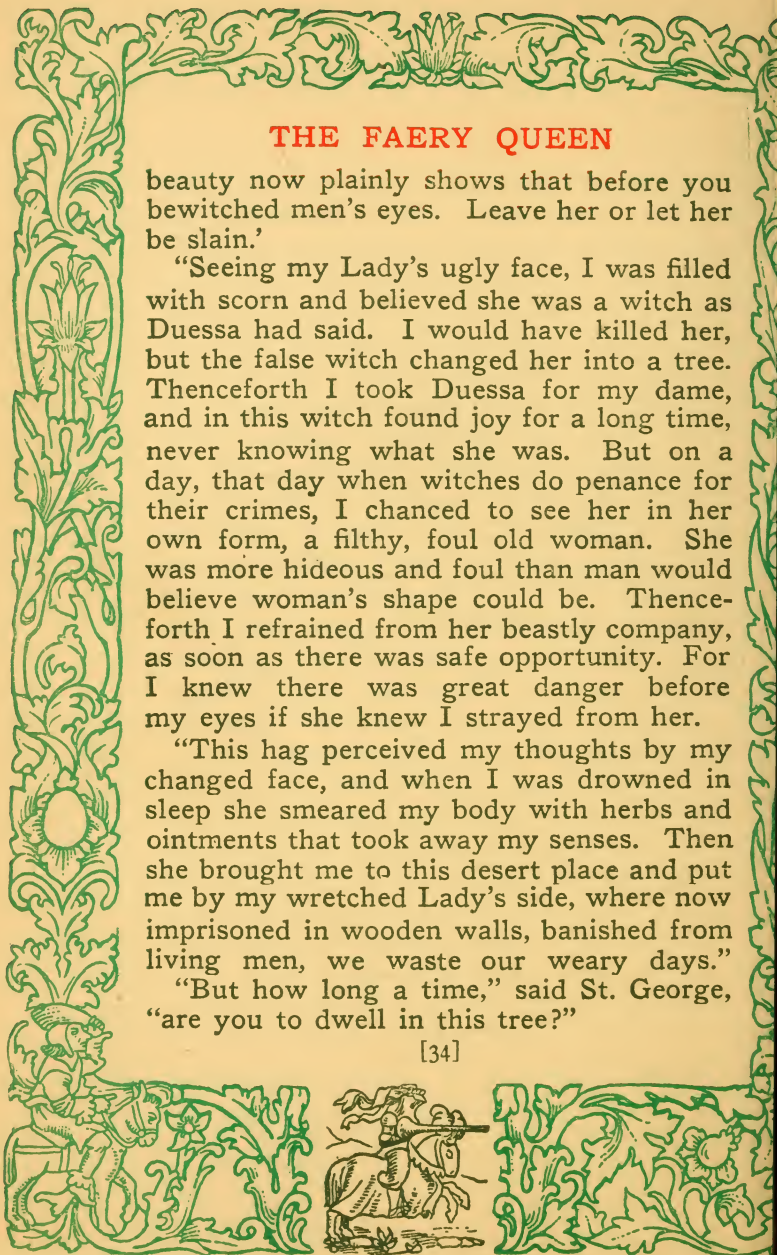
THE FAERY QUEEN

beauty now plainly shows that before you bewitched men's eyes. Leave her or let her be slain.'

"Seeing my Lady's ugly face, I was filled with scorn and believed she was a witch as Duessa had said. I would have killed her, but the false witch changed her into a tree. Thenceforth I took Duessa for my dame, and in this witch found joy for a long time, never knowing what she was. But on a day, that day when witches do penance for their crimes, I chanced to see her in her own form, a filthy, foul old woman. She was more hideous and foul than man would believe woman's shape could be. Thenceforth I refrained from her beastly company, as soon as there was safe opportunity. For I knew there was great danger before my eyes if she knew I strayed from her.

"This hag perceived my thoughts by my changed face, and when I was drowned in sleep she smeared my body with herbs and ointments that took away my senses. Then she brought me to this desert place and put me by my wretched Lady's side, where now imprisoned in wooden walls, banished from living men, we waste our weary days."

"But how long a time," said St. George, "are you to dwell in this tree?"



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"We may not change," said he, "until we are bathed in a living well."

"O how," said he, "might I find out that well that may restore you to your shape?"

"Time and fate shall restore us to our former kind. None else can help us," the tree replied.

The false Duessa, now called Fidessa, heard how in vain Fradubio lamented, and knew well all was true. But the good Knight, full of fear and horror, when the tree had made this speech, thrust the bleeding bough into the ground that he might be innocent from the blood, and closed the wound with fresh clay. Then he turned to his Lady, who lay as if dead with fear, pretending not to know what well she knew. He busied himself to bring her out of her swoon. At last she began to lift up her eyelids, and with woeful face he took her up and kissed her often. And when all fear was past, he set her on her steed, and forward both rode away.

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CHAPTER IV.

UNA AND THE LION.—THE LION KILLS A ROBBER.—ARCHIMAGO, DISGUISED AS ST. GEORGE, MEETS UNA.—SANSLOY, BROTHER OF SANSFOY, FIGHTS WITH ARCHIMAGO.—SANSLOY KILLS THE LION AND SEIZES UNA.







CHAPTER IV

NOTHING moves compassion more than beauty being brought to wretchedness by envy or by freaks of fortune. And now we could weep to think how Una through deception, though daughter of a king, though fair as ever living being was fair, though she had not in word or deed merited ill, is separated in despair from her Knight, and the love due her given to that vile witch.

Yet she, most faithful Lady, forsaken, woeful, solitary, far from all crowds, as if in exile, strayed in the wilderness and in wasteful deserts to seek her Knight, who, subtly deceived by the vision which Archimago wrought, had abandoned her. She, fearful of nothing, daily sought him through woods and wide wastes, yet no tidings of him were brought to her.



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One day, weary of the irksome way, she alighted from her slow beast, and laid her dainty limbs on the grass, in the secret shade, far from all men's sight. From her fair head she took off her fillet, and she laid her black robe aside. Her angel's countenance shone bright as the sun, and made sunshine in that shady spot, for mortal eyes never beheld such heavenly grace.

It happened that out of the thickest wood a ramping lion suddenly rushed, hunting after savage blood. Soon as he spied the royal virgin, he ran greedily at her with gaping mouth, as if at once he would devour her tender body. But when he drew nearer to his prey, his bloody rage was assuaged by pity, and, amazed at the sight, he forgot his fury.

Instead, he kissed her weary feet, and licked her lily hands with fawning tongue, as if he knew her wronged innocence. O, beauty can master the strongest, and simple truth can subdue wrong. Though she had feared death, now when she saw this proud brute thus submissive, her heart began to melt with compassion, and she shed pure, affectionate tears.

"The Lion," she said, "lord of every beast in the field, does abate his princely

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might, and the proud yields to humble weakness, forgetful of his hungry rage in pity for my sad condition. But he, my noble lord, how does he find it in his cruel heart to hate her that loved and adored him? Why has he abhorred me?"

Abundant tears choked the rest of her lament, which softly echoed through the wood. And, sad at seeing her sorrow, the kingly beast stood gazing upon her. His angry mood was calmed down with pity. At last, shutting up her pain in her heart, the virgin arose and got again upon her palfrey, to go in search of her Champion who had strayed from her.

But the Lion would not leave her desolate, but went along with her as her strong guard and a faithful mate of her troubles. Ever when she slept he kept watch, and when she waked he waited diligently to serve her will. He took his orders from her fair eyes and by her looks understood her desires. Long she thus travelled through wide deserts, where she thought her wandering Knight might pass. Yet she saw no living man, until at length she found trodden grass where there were tracks of people's feet, under a steep mountain. This way she followed until at last

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she spied a damsel walking slowly before her, and bearing upon her shoulders a waterpot.

As she approached, Una began to call to know if any house was near at hand. But the rude girl did not answer her at all; she would not hear, nor speak, nor understand. Till, seeing the Lion by her side, she threw her pitcher down with sudden fear and fled away; for never before in that land had she seen the face of a fair lady, and the look of that dreadful Lion made her pale as death. Fast she fled, nor ever looked behind. Home she ran, where her blind mother sat in darkness. She was not able to speak, but suddenly catching hold of her dame, she frightened her with her shaking hands and other signs of fear. Then full of fright she began to shut the door. By this time Una arrived and asked admission, which being refused, the lion with his rude claws rent the gate open and let her in, where Una found them both in darkness, almost dead with fear. But Una, to remove their needless fear, spoke fitting words, and prayed that she might rest in their cottage that night.

When the day had gone and drowsy night had come, Una laid her down wearily,

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and at her feet the Lion kept watch, but she instead of sleeping lamented and wept for the loss of her beloved Knight. In the middle of the night, when all the others lay in deadly sleep, some one knocked at the door, and cursed and knocked so fast that he was not let in at once. For on his back he bore a heavy load of stolen goods which he had gotten abroad by robbery. He was indeed a stout thief, by name Kirk-rapine, who was used to rob churches and poor men's boxes of alms. And all that he could find he brought to this house, and bestowed it upon Abessa, the daughter of the blind woman, Corceca.

Thus he beat the door long with rage and threats, yet the women were afraid to rise to let him in, because of the Lion. At length he would stay outside no longer, and furiously broke the door down and entered, when the Lion, meeting him fiercely, seized him with his cruel claws and put him down under his lordly foot. It helped him not to struggle nor to call, for the beast soon rent him into a thousand pieces. His frightened friends did not dare to cry out nor seem to understand what had been done, for fear they might be dealt with in the same way.

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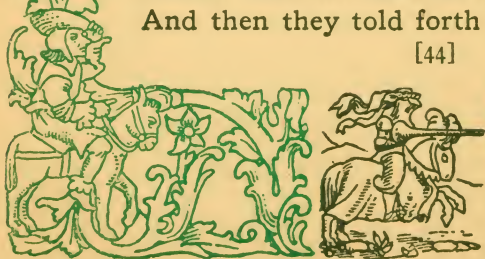


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Now when the broad day had come, up Una rose, and the Lion, too, and they passed forward on their journey in unknown ways, to seek her wandering Knight. Still she sought him who fled from her. As soon as she left that house, the frightened women forsook their beds, and, finding the robber slain, they began to tear their hair and beat their breasts. And when they had wailed and wept their fill, they ran forth half crazed with desire for revenge, to follow her that had brought this evil upon them.

When they had overtaken her, they began to cry loudly and to rail at her. And they prayed that plagues and misery and mischief might fall upon her. But when they were weary with their curses, they turned back toward their home, and in the way they met a knight bearing mighty arms, who was not a knight at all, but the subtile Archimago, who sought Una, that he might bring new troubles upon her. He asked of those women if they could tell anything of such a lady as Una.

Thereupon they began to renew their curses and cries, and to say that they had lately known that vile person, who had caused them to shed so many bitter tears. And then they told forth their tale. This



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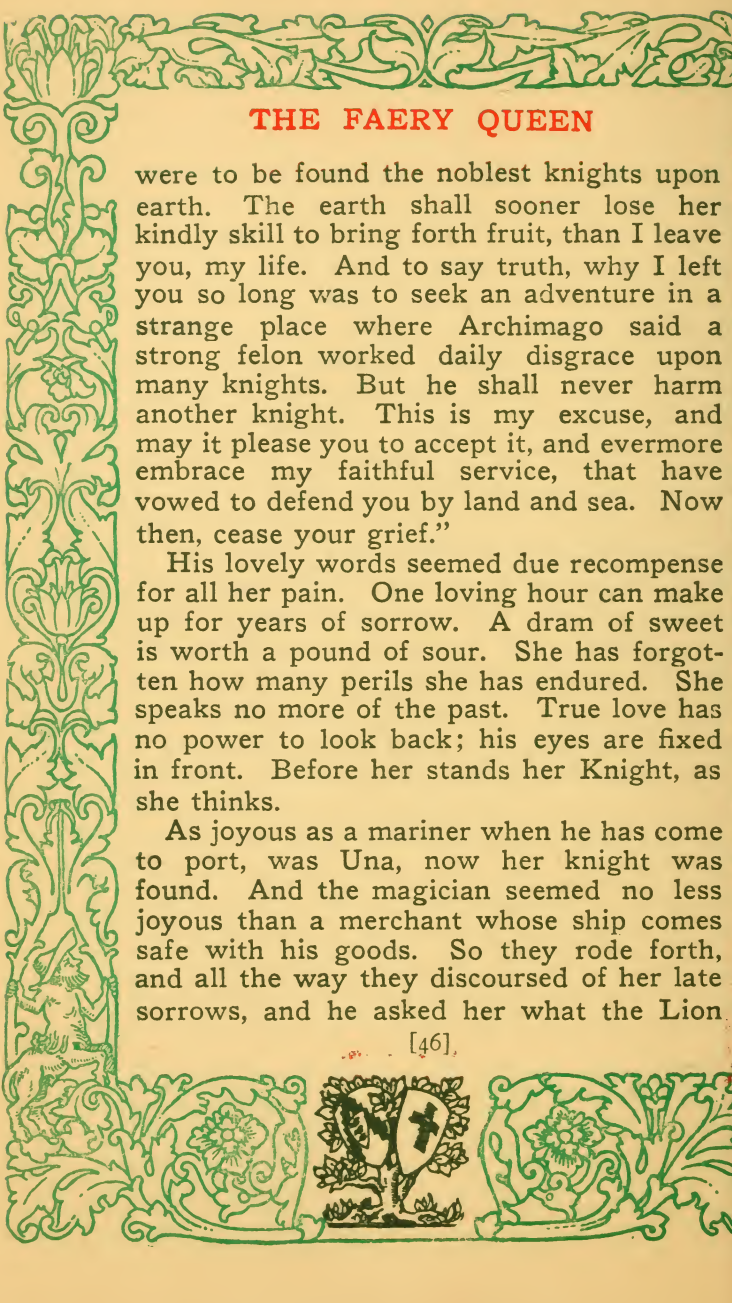
Archimago seemed to mourn much for their mishap, and then inquired for that Lady, and when he had learned which way she had gone he rode forward with his lance in his hand.

Before long, he came where Una travelled slowly, with her wild champion, the Lion, by her side. When he saw this beast, he feared to show himself too near, but turned away toward a hill. From thence she saw him, and by his shield, like that of her Knight, she thought it was he, and began to ride toward him. Approaching near, she thought it was the same, and with timid humility she came toward him, and weeping said, "Ah, my lord, where have you been so long out of my sight? Much I have feared to be so hated. What have I done that might displease you? Since my eyes have missed the joyful sight of you, my cheerful day is turned to cheerless night and my night is the shadow of death. But welcome now, my light and shining lamp of bliss."

He, meeting her, said, "My dearest dame, far be it from your thought and from my will, to think that I should so shame knight-hood as to leave you that have loved me and chosen me in the Faery court, where

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were to be found the noblest knights upon earth. The earth shall sooner lose her kindly skill to bring forth fruit, than I leave you, my life. And to say truth, why I left you so long was to seek an adventure in a strange place where Archimago said a strong felon worked daily disgrace upon many knights. But he shall never harm another knight. This is my excuse, and may it please you to accept it, and evermore embrace my faithful service, that have vowed to defend you by land and sea. Now then, cease your grief."

His lovely words seemed due recompense for all her pain. One loving hour can make up for years of sorrow. A dram of sweet is worth a pound of sour. She has forgotten how many perils she has endured. She speaks no more of the past. True love has no power to look back; his eyes are fixed in front. Before her stands her Knight, as she thinks.

As joyous as a mariner when he has come to port, was Una, now her knight was found. And the magician seemed no less joyous than a merchant whose ship comes safe with his goods. So they rode forth, and all the way they discoursed of her late sorrows, and he asked her what the Lion



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meant. And she told him all that happened to her, as they journeyed.

They had not ridden far, when they saw one spurring toward them rapidly, strongly armed and mounted on a free courser that foamed with sweat. And he champed his bit with anger when his rider chafed his sides with the spurs. His look was stern, and he seemed to threaten cruel revenge. And he was Sansloy, the brother of Sansfoy, whom St. George had slain.

When he drew near unto this pair, and saw the Redcross which the knight bore, he burned with rage, and began to prepare himself for battle with his couched spear. Archimago was loath to fight, and almost fainted with fear. But his Lady cheered him so well that he began to feel hope of good fortune. So he bent his spear and spurred his horse with his iron heel.

But that proud Saracen came forward so fiercely that with his sharp spear he pierced quite through his shield, and had his horse not shrunk back through fear, he would have borne him through shield and body. Yet so great was the strength of his blow that he forced him from his saddle, so that he tumbled down to the ground and a well of blood gushed from his hurt. Dismount-



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ing lightly from his steed, he leaped upon him to take his life, and said proudly, "Lo, there is the worthy reward of him that slew Sansfoy, my brother, with a bloody knife. Now he is avenged. You took life from Sansfoy, and Sansloy shall take yours."

Therewith he hastily began to unlace his helmet, when Una cried, "O, hold your heavy hand, dear sir. Enough is it that your vanquished foe is at your mercy. For he is one of the truest knights alive, though now he lies conquered. While fortune favored him, he thrived fairly in a bloody field. Therefore do not take his life."

Her piteous words could not lessen his rage, but roughly rending his helmet, he would have slain him at once. But when he saw the gray head of Archimago, he held back his hasty hand and wondered at the sight. For he knew the old man well, and that he had wondrous power in charms and magic, and was never used to fight in the fields nor in the lists. Then he said, "Why, Archimago, unlucky man, what do I see? What hard mishap is this that has brought you here under my anger? Is it your fault or my error to wound my friend instead of a foe?"

But he answered nothing, but lay still in



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a trance, and one would have thought he was near to death; which, when Sansloy saw, he stayed no longer by him, but went to Una, who all this while stood amazed that she was so mocked by him who had feigned to be her true knight. Yet was she now in more perplexity that she was left in the hand of that bold Saracen, from whom she was not able to fly. He now caught her by her garment and plucked her from her palfrey that he might see her face.

But her fierce servant, the Lion, full of kingly rage, when he saw his lady so rudely handled by her foe, came at him with gaping, greedy mouth, and, leaping on his shield, tried to tear it away with his sharp, rending claws. But the Saracen was stout and snatched his shield away, and drew forth his sword.

O, then too weak and feeble was the force of a savage beast to withstand his power. For he was strong, and as mighty in body as any who ever wielded a spear, and he understood well feats of arms. And he pierced through his chest with the thrilling point of the deadly iron, and even into his lordly heart. The Lion roared aloud, oppressed with death, while his life forsook him.

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Who now is left to guard the forlorn maiden? Her faithful guard is removed, and she is yielded a prey to the victor. He is now lord of the field and he utters foul reproaches and disdainful spite.

And whether she would or no, he bore her away upon his courser. All the way, with great lamentings and piteous cries she fills his ears, so that a heart of stone would have been riven in twain. All the way she wets with flowing tears, but he, enraged with hate, listens to nothing. But her friendly palfrey would not leave her so, but follows her afar off; he does not fear to partake of her wanderings. He was more mild in beastly kind than her beastly foe.

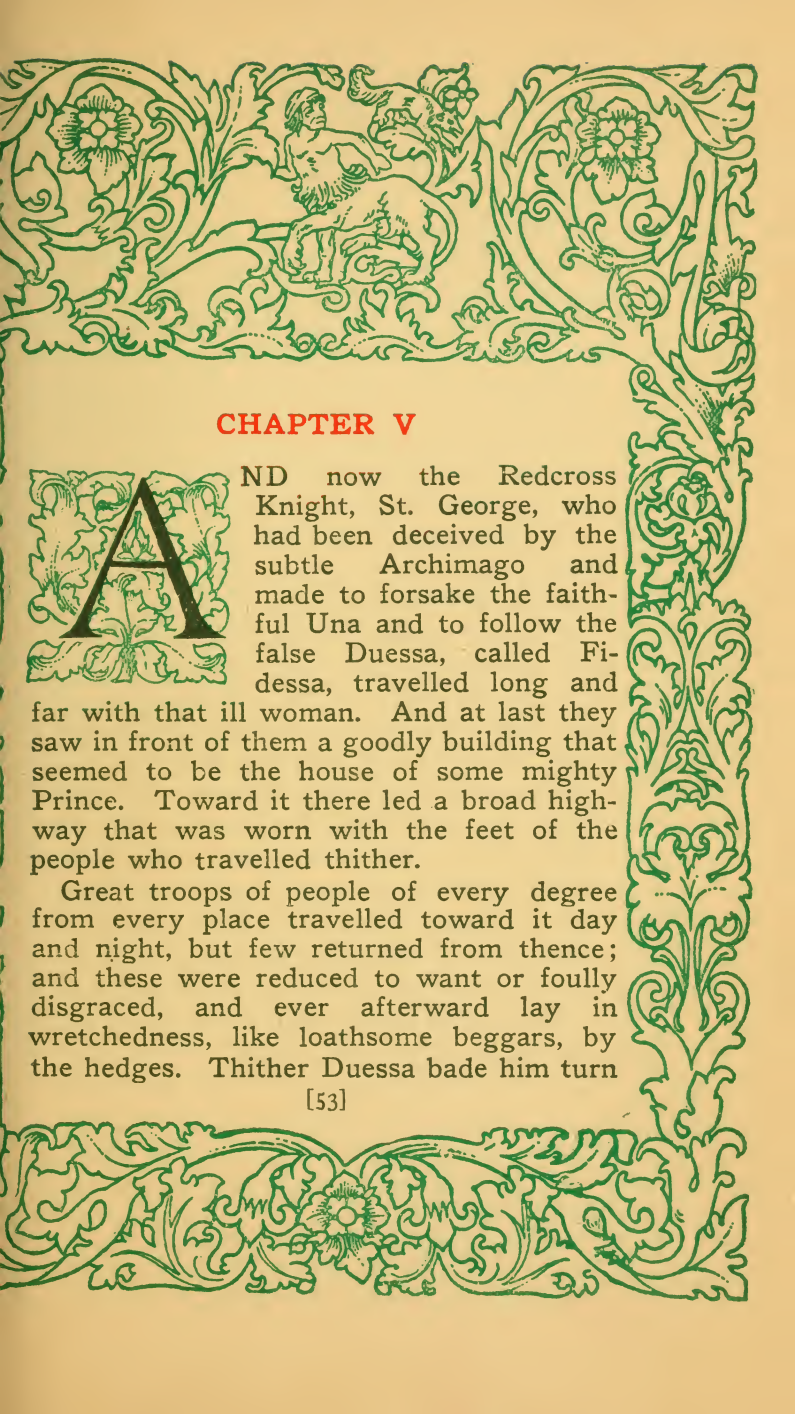


CHAPTER V.

THE REDCROSS KNIGHT GOES WITH
DUESSA TO THE HOUSE OF PRIDE.—DAME
PRIDE RECEIVES THEM.—ST. GEORGE
MEETS SANSJOY, BROTHER OF SANSFOY
AND SANSLOY.







CHAPTER V

AND now the Redcross Knight, St. George, who had been deceived by the subtle Archimago and made to forsake the faithful Una and to follow the false Duessa, called Fidessa, travelled long and far with that ill woman. And at last they saw in front of them a goodly building that seemed to be the house of some mighty Prince. Toward it there led a broad highway that was worn with the feet of the people who travelled thither.

Great troops of people of every degree from every place travelled toward it day and night, but few returned from thence; and these were reduced to want or foully disgraced, and ever afterward lay in wretchedness, like loathsome beggars, by the hedges. Thither Duessa bade him turn

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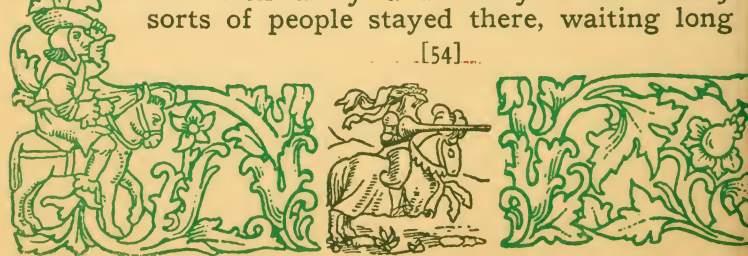
his horse, for she was weary of the toilsome journey, and the day was almost gone.

Before them was a stately palace of square bricks, which were cunningly laid without mortar. The walls were high, but not thick nor strong, and gold foil was displayed all over them, so that they outshone the brightest sky. There were many lofty towers, and goodly galleries, full of fair windows and delightful nooks. On the top was a dial that marked the passing time.

It was a goodly heap to look upon. One could not see it without praising the workman's skill that built it. But it seemed a great pity that so fair a house stood upon so weak a foundation; for it was placed upon a sandy hill, and every breeze shook it, and all the back parts, that few could see, were ruinous and old, but they were cunningly painted so as to deceive those who beheld them.

Arrived there, they passed right in, for all the gates stood wide open, yet they were in charge of a porter called Malvenu, who denied no one entrance. Thence they went to the hall, which was decked on every side with rich array and costly arras. Many sorts of people stayed there, waiting long

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to obtain the sight of Dame Pride that was the Lady of the bright palace.

But all these they passed, gazing round upon them, and mounted to the presence of the Lady, whose glorious appearance amazed their senses. Such riches and sumptuousness were never known in the court of any living prince. Persia itself, the home of pompous pride, never saw the like. There a noble crew of Lords and Ladies stood on every side, beautifying the place with their presence.

High above all was spread a cloth of state, and a rich throne bright as a sunny day. On this there sat, bravely dressed with royal robes and gorgeous array, a maiden Queen, Dame Pride herself, who shone in glittering gold and peerless precious stones. Yet her bright, blazing beauty dimmed the brightness of the throne. She shone proud in her princely state, looking toward heaven and disdaining the earth. Underneath her feet lay a dreadful Dragon; in her hand she held a bright mirror, wherein she often viewed her face, for she took great delight in her own semblance.

She was the daughter of grisly Pluto and the sad Proserpina. Yet she thought her peerless worth above such parentage; she

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was so swollen with vanity that she claimed for her father the thundering Jupiter, who dwells in heaven and rules the world. For she aspired to the highest, and if anything were higher than Jupiter she would have desired that. Men called her the proud Lucifera, who made herself a Queen, though she had no rightful kingdom, but usurped the sceptre which she now held. Nor did she rule her realm with laws, but policy, and the advice of six old wizards who by their bad counsels upheld her kingdom.

Soon as the Redcross Knight and the false Duessa came into her presence, a gentle usher, named Vanity, made room for them and brought them to the lowest step of her throne. There they made obeisance on their knees and declared the reason why they were come to see her royal state, to learn for themselves the truth as to the fame of her great Majesty. With lofty eyes, half loath to look so low, she thanked them in her proud manner. Nor did she show them any other favor worthy of a princess, scarcely bidding them arise.

But her Lords and Ladies, having arranged their ruffs and decked themselves in their gayest attire, began to entertain

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the Knight, glad to have increased their number by his presence. And to Duessa each one took pains to show all kindness and fair courtesy, for in that court they had formerly known her well. Yet the stout Redcross Knight, among that crowd, thought all their glory vain, and the great Princess too exceeding proud who showed no better countenance to a strange knight.

Suddenly the royal dame rose up from her stately place, and called for her coach. Then all rushed out while she with queenly pace went forth, blazing brightly as the sun at the dawn. The crowds of people, thronging the hall, got each upon the other's back to gaze upon her. Her glory and light amazed all men's eyes. So she went forth and climbed to her coach, adorned with gold and garlands. She strove to match in her rich array Juno's golden chair, at which they say the gods stand gazing.

Her coach was drawn by six beasts on which her six Counsellors rode. The first of these was Idleness, who chose to ride upon a slothful Ass. The second was Gluttony, a deformed creature, who was mounted upon a Swine. Next Riot rode upon a bearded Goat. By his side was greedy Avarice, upon a Camel laden with





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gold. Next him was Envy, upon a ravenous Wolf. Beside him rode fierce, avenging Wrath, upon a Lion.

After all, upon the wagon beam, rode Satan, with a smarting whip in his hand, with which he lashed forward the lazy team. Huge crowds of people stood about them shouting for joy. Still before the way a foggy mist covered all the land, and underneath their feet lay skulls and bones of men who had strayed into sin.

So forth they marched to take the solace of the open air and to sport in the fresh, flowering fields. Among the rest rode that false, fair Lady, the foul Duessa, next the seat of the proud Lucifera. But the good Knight, disliking their vain joy, would not ride so near those who seemed unfit company for a warrior. When they had enjoyed for a time the pleasure of the open fields, they all returned back to the princely house.

And there they found a wandering knight clad in armor, and bearing a shield whereon was written in red letters the name *Sansjoy*. And when he saw the shield of his dead brother, Sansfoy, that St. George had taken and kept in charge of his Dwarf, he burned with rage, for now he knew it was

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the Redcross Knight that had slain him. He leaped upon the Dwarf and snatched away the shield, the gage of the victor's glory. But St. George, who owned that hard-won buckler, disdained to lose what he had won in fight, and fiercely rushing in, rescued the noble shield.

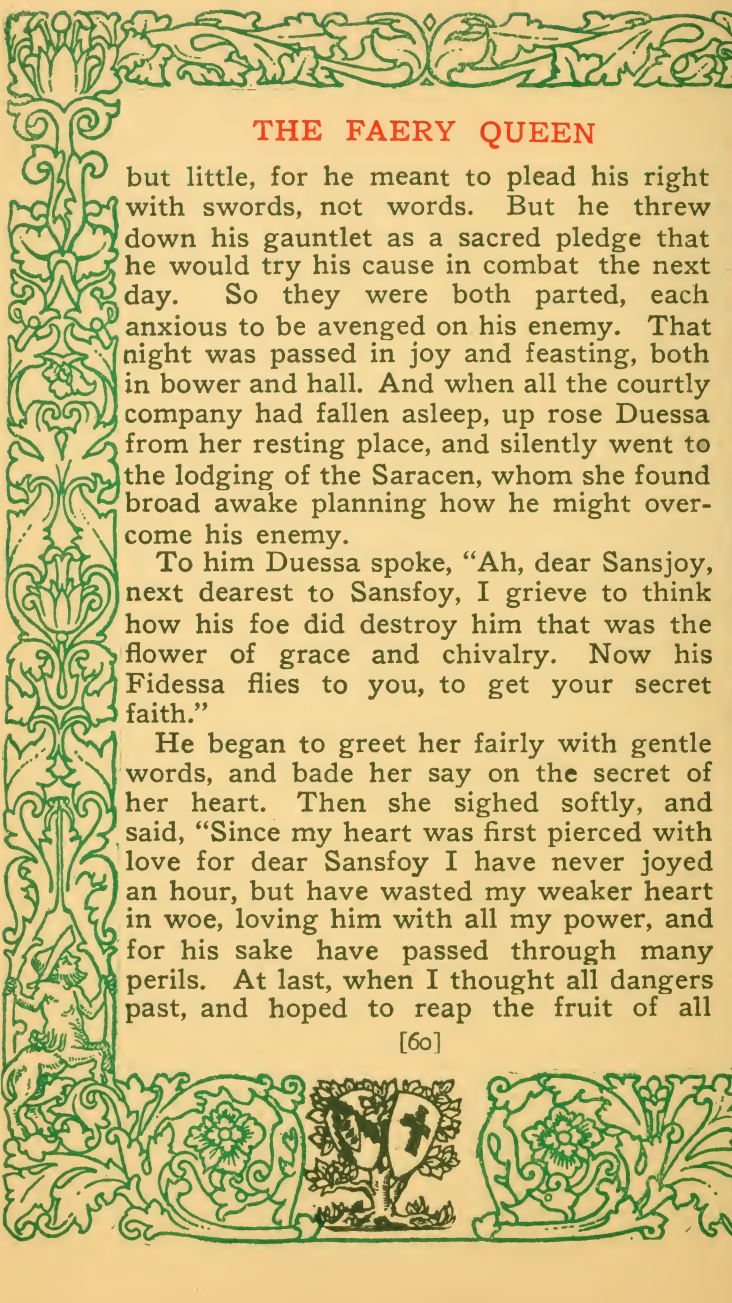
Thereupon they began to battle fiercely, to clash their shields and shake their swords on high, so that with their stir they disturbed all the company. Then that great Queen commanded them to cease their fury, upon her high displeasure. And she said that if either of them had right to that shield they should fight for it on the next day in the lists.

"Ah, dearest Dame," said the Saracen, "forgive the error of an angry man, whom great grief made forget to hold the reins of reason. This is a recreant knight who through guile has slain the proudest knight that ever fought in a field, and whose shield he bears to heap scorn upon me. And, to increase his guilt, he has possessed himself of my brother's dearest love, the fair Fidessa. His brother's hand shall dearly repay him, if, O Queen, you will show equal favor."

The angry knight St. George answered

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but little, for he meant to plead his right with swords, not words. But he threw down his gauntlet as a sacred pledge that he would try his cause in combat the next day. So they were both parted, each anxious to be avenged on his enemy. That night was passed in joy and feasting, both in bower and hall. And when all the courtly company had fallen asleep, up rose Duessa from her resting place, and silently went to the lodging of the Saracen, whom she found broad awake planning how he might overcome his enemy.

To him Duessa spoke, "Ah, dear Sansjoy, next dearest to Sansfoy, I grieve to think how his foe did destroy him that was the flower of grace and chivalry. Now his Fidessa flies to you, to get your secret faith."

He began to greet her fairly with gentle words, and bade her say on the secret of her heart. Then she sighed softly, and said, "Since my heart was first pierced with love for dear Sansfoy I have never joyed an hour, but have wasted my weaker heart in woe, loving him with all my power, and for his sake have passed through many perils. At last, when I thought all dangers past, and hoped to reap the fruit of all

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my care, I was cast into new woes by this false traitor who entrapped him with his guile, slew him, and brought him to a shameful grave. Then he carried me away, a silly maid, and ever since has kept me in a dark cavern. But now some light has come into my life by your presence. And to you belongs by right the love I gave him, your brother. Let not his love be unrevenged."

Thereto he said, "Fair Dame, think not of sorrows past. Nor yet be afraid of present evil. It is useless to moan for what cannot be helped. Sansfoy is dead, and he lives who shall sacrifice in haste the guilty blood of this Knight."

"Oh, but I fear," said she, "the freaks of fickle fortune and the odds of arms in the field of battle."

"Why, Dame," he said, "what can be the odds where both fight alike to win or yield?"

"Yes, but," she said, "he bears a charmed shield and enchanted armor that no one can pierce. And no one can wound the man who wields them."

"Charmed or enchanted," he answered fiercely, "I care no whit. Nor need you to tell me of the like. But, fair Fidessa, since



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fortune has deceived you, or your enemy's power has made you a captive, go back whence you came, and rest awhile, until the morrow, when I shall overcome that Knight and give to you the dowry of the dead Sansfoy."

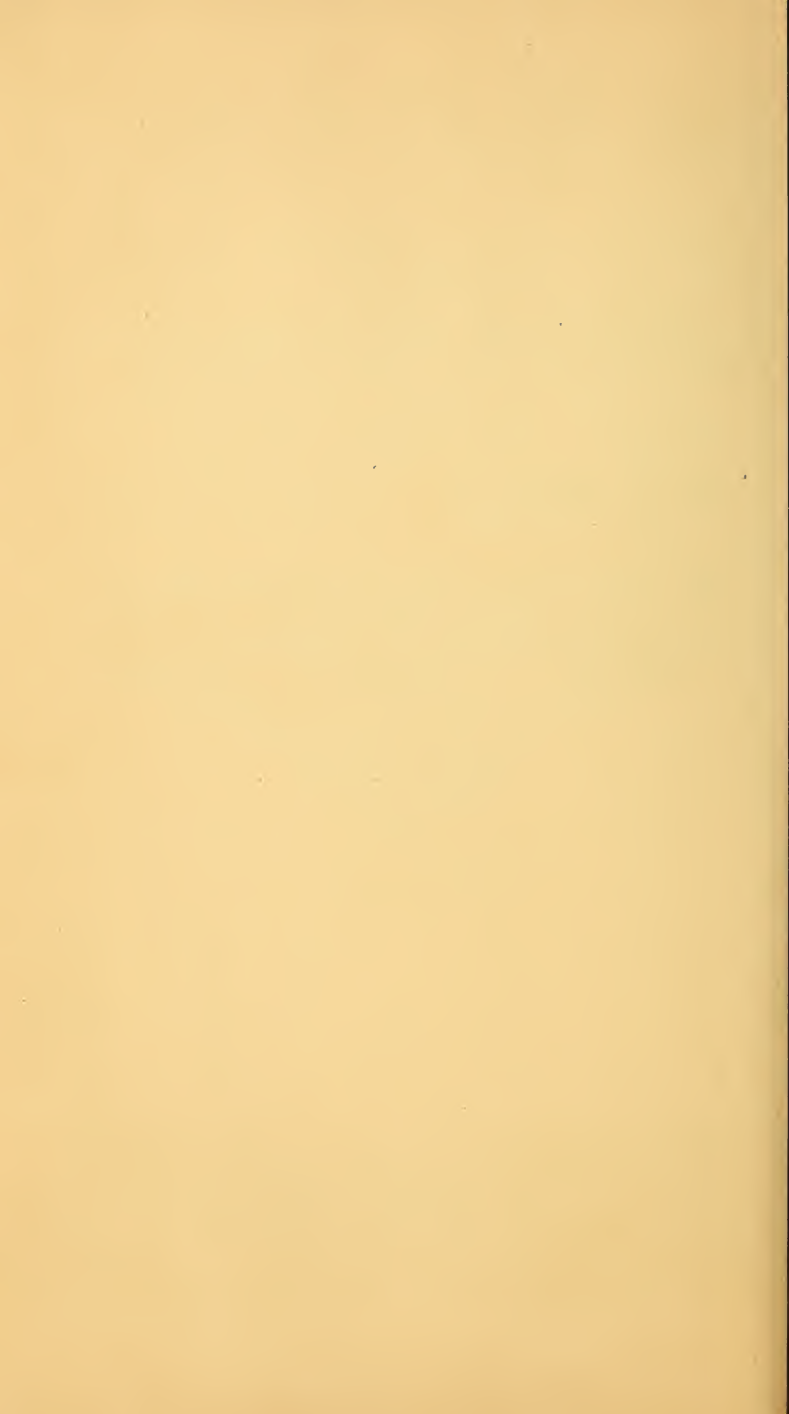
"Wherever I am," she said, "my secret aid shall follow you." And, obeying him, she passed forth.

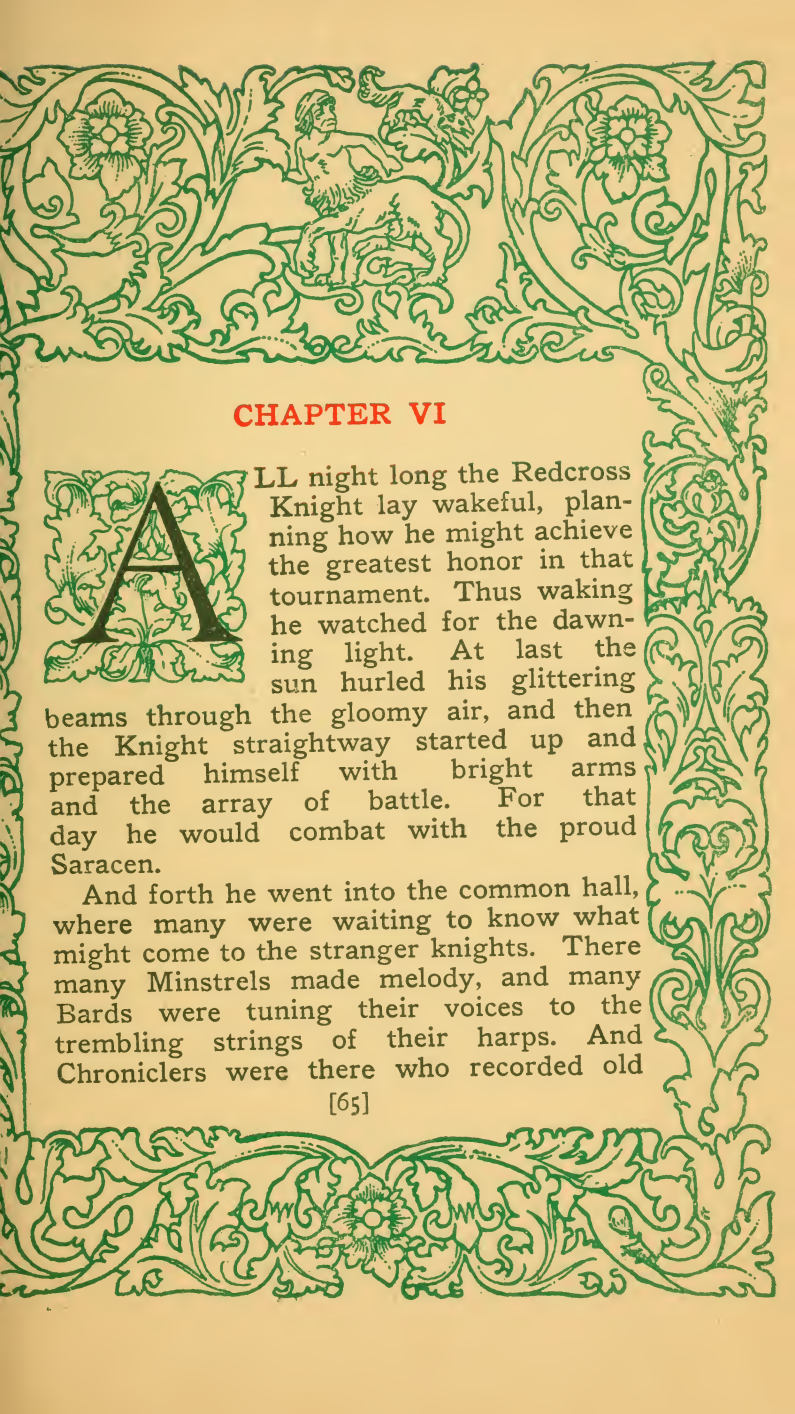


CHAPTER VI.

THE BATTLE OF THE REDCROSS KNIGHT
WITH SANSJOY.—A CLOUD HIDES SANSJOY.
—THE VISIT OF DUESSA TO NIGHT.—SANS-
JOY IS PLACED UNDER THE CARE OF
ÆSCULAPIUS.—ST. GEORGE AND THE
DWARF LEAVE THE HOUSE OF PRIDE.







CHAPTER VI

ALL night long the Redcross Knight lay wakeful, planning how he might achieve the greatest honor in that tournament. Thus waking he watched for the dawning light. At last the sun hurled his glittering beams through the gloomy air, and then the Knight straightway started up and prepared himself with bright arms and the array of battle. For that day he would combat with the proud Saracen.

And forth he went into the common hall, where many were waiting to know what might come to the stranger knights. There many Minstrels made melody, and many Bards were tuning their voices to the trembling strings of their harps. And Chroniclers were there who recorded old

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love stories and the wars that Lords made for their Ladies.

Soon after came the cruel Saracen, armed with woven mail, and he sternly looked at the Redcross Knight, who cared not a pin for the look of any man. Then the servitors brought them wines and spices; and they bound themselves with a solemn oath to observe the sacred laws of arms.

At last came forth the renowned Queen, with regal pomp and majesty. And she was brought to a grassy place, and set under a stately canopy, where she could see the warlike feats of both those knights. On the other side, in all men's view, Duessa was placed. And on a tree the shield of Sansfoy was hung. Both of these were to be won by the victor.

A shrill trumpet sounded from on high, and bade them get ready for their battle. They tied their shining shields about their wrists, and they brandished their burning blades about their heads. With greedy force they assailed each other and impressed deep, dinted furrows in the battered mail.

The Saracen was stout and wondrous strong, and heaped blows like great iron

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hammers, for he longed after blood and vengeance. The Knight was fierce and full of youthful heat, and doubled his strokes like the threatenings of dreaded thunders; and he fought for glory and honor. Both strike when struck, so that from their shields fiery light flies forth and the hewn helmets show deep marks of either's might.

So the one strives for wrong and the other strives for right, and each would drive his foe to deadly shame. The cruel steel so greedily bites the tender flesh that streams of blood flow down, with which their armor, that at first shone bright, is now dyed into a pure vermilion. Great pity grew in the hearts of all who looked on, beholding the wide gaping wounds, so that they dared not wish victory for either side.

At last the Saracen chanced to cast his eye, with wrathful fire, upon his brother's shield that hung near. Thereupon his rage was redoubled, and he cried, "Ah, wretched son of an unhappy sire, do you sit wailing in the land of spirits while your shield hangs here as a reward of the victor? Let my sluggish blood be stirred to send after you your foe. Go, caitiff Knight, overtake your victim in the other world. Go, guilty

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ghost, take him my message, that I have won his shield from his dying foe."

Thereupon, he struck the Knight upon the crest, so that he reeled twice, and was ready twice to fall. This the lookers-on thought was the end of the battle, and the false Duessa, ready to be on the side of the victor, cried loudly to the Saracen, "The shield is yours, and so am I, and all."

Soon as the Redcross Knight heard his Lady's voice, he began to awake out of his swoon, and his faith that had grown weak became stronger, and he shook away the deadly cold. Then, moved with wrath and shame, he desired to be avenged of all at once, and struck with such exceeding fury that he forced the Saracen to stoop upon his knee; had he not stooped he would have been cloven through the head. And to him the Knight said, "Go now, proud miscreant, bear the message yourself to your dear brother. He has been wandering alone too long without you. Go, say his foe does bear his shield."

Therewith he began to lift high his heavy hand to slay him, when, lo, a dark cloud fell upon the Saracen, and he vanished from the eyes of the Redcross Knight. He called aloud to him, but received no



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answer, for the darkness hid him. Then in haste Duessa rose from her seat, seeing St. George now the victor, and ready to be on the conqueror's side, whichever it might be, and she ran to him saying, "O, bravest Knight that ever lady chose for her love, now abate the terror of your might and gloomy vengeance. Lo, the infernal powers covering your foe with a cloud of night have borne him hence to Pluto's dwelling. The victory is yours; I am yours; the shield and the glory are yours."

But not satisfied, the Knight with greedy eyes sought all about to bathe his sword in the blood of his faithless enemy, who all that while lay hidden in secret shadows. The Knight stood amazed how his foe had vanished thence. And last the trumpets sounded for his victory, and the running heralds did him homage, greeting him as conqueror, and they brought him the shield, the cause of the strife.

With this the Knight went to the sovereign Queen, and, falling before her on his lowly knee, made the offer of his services, which she accepted with thanks and goodly favor. So they marched home, and by her rode the Knight whom all the people followed with great glee, shouting and clap-



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ping all their hands on high so that the sound filled the air.

Home the Knight was brought and laid in a sumptuous bed, for his hurts were painful, though not very great, and there many skilful physicians dressed his wounds, that bled freshly. They washed his hurts with wine and oil. And all the while heavenly melody of sweet music was made to soothe his pain. And all the while Duessa wept bitterly in false grief. So wept Duessa until evening, and then she rose and went to the place where the Saracen knight lay in a swoon, covered with an enchanted cloud. And when she found him thus, she would not stay to mourn his woe, but made speedy way to the Eastern coast of the heavens, where grisly Night, with sad visage, and clad in a foul, black, pitchy mantle, was found coming from her dark home where she hid all day. Before the door her iron chariot stood, already harnessed for her new journey, and her coal black steeds were champing their rusty bits.

When Night saw the fair Duessa, adorned with gold and jewels, she was amazed, and began to fear the unfamiliar light, for such brightness had never appeared in her realm before. She would

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have retired back into her cave, when she heard the false one's voice, saying, "O dreaded Dame, wait till I have told my message."

Then Night stayed, and Duessa began: "Oh, ancient Grandmother of all, why suffered you your dear nephews to fall before the sword of the Redcross Knight? Lo, the stout Sansjoy swoons. And before him, I saw the bold Sansfoy shrink beneath his spear. Who shall not scorn the children of great Night, when her nephews are so neglected? Up then, up, Dame, Queen of Darkness, go gather up the remains of your race. Or else avenge them."

Her feeling speeches moved some compassion in the heart of Night, who said, "Dear daughter, rightly may I pity the fall of my famous children and the successes of their foes. But who can turn the stream of destiny, or break the chain of necessity which is tied fast to Jove's eternal seat? I see that he favors the sons of Day, and thinks to make them great by my ruin. Yet shall the man who made Sansfoy fall pay with his own blood for that which he has spilt. But who are you, who tell me of the death of my nephews?"

"I, that do not seem myself, am Duessa,"

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said she, "though now arrayed in gorgeous gold. I am Duessa, the daughter of Deceit and Shame."

Then Night got upon her iron wagon head, kissed the wicked wretch, saying, "In that fair face I see the resemblance of Deceit. Yet you seemed so true that in this dark place I could scarcely discern it, though I am the mother of Falsehood. O, welcome, child, whom I have longed to see. Lo, now I will go with you."

Then Night got upon her iron wagon, and with her bore the foul, but beautiful witch. She made her ready way through the murky air with her two-fold team, that softly swam away, trampling the fine element. So well they sped that they came at length to the place where the Saracen lay senseless, covered with the charmed cloud. His cruel wounds were congealed with blood, but they bound them as best they could, and laid him in the chariot. Thence turning back in silence they stole softly away and brought the body to the yawning gulf of Avernus... And there through the entrance, dark with smoke and sulphur, they drove their chariot down to Pluto's house.

They passed the bitter waves of Acheron,

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and the flood of Phlegethon, and, before the house, they found the dreadful dog Cerberus, who being appeased by Night, hung down his tail and suffered them to pass. There ancient Night alighted and, taking the Knight in her arms, bore him to Aesculapius. Then having softly taken off his armor to uncover all his wounds, she besought him, if salves or oils or herbs or charms could raise him from the door of death, that he would prolong her nephew's days.

Then this learned man began to treat the wounds with his cunning hand, and all things that his art taught. Having seen this, the mother of darkness rose to go away, leaving the Saracen in the care of Aesculapius. Back she returned to run her race, while the Sun drew his wagon through the Western waves.

The false Duessa, leaving Night, returned to the stately palace of Dame Pride, where when she came she found St. George gone thence, although his wounds were not well healed. Good cause he had to hasten from that place, for one day his wary Dwarf had spied where in a deep dungeon large numbers of captive knights were kept. The Dwarf had learned secretly the cause



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of their imprisonment, how Covetousness, Riot, Tyranny, Wrath, and Envy had condemned them to that dungeon, where they lived in woe and died in wretchedness.

And when the careful Dwarf had told their case and their mournful sight to his Master, he would stay no longer in peril of such a fate. But he rose early, and before the dawn he fled by a private gate, that no envious eyes might see him, for doubtless death would have followed if he had been found.

He could scarcely find footing in that road, for the corpses of murdered men that were strewed there, which came to a shameful end through the great Princess Pride. As he rode underneath the castle wall, he spied a great heap of carcasses, the dreadful spectacle of that sad house of Pride.

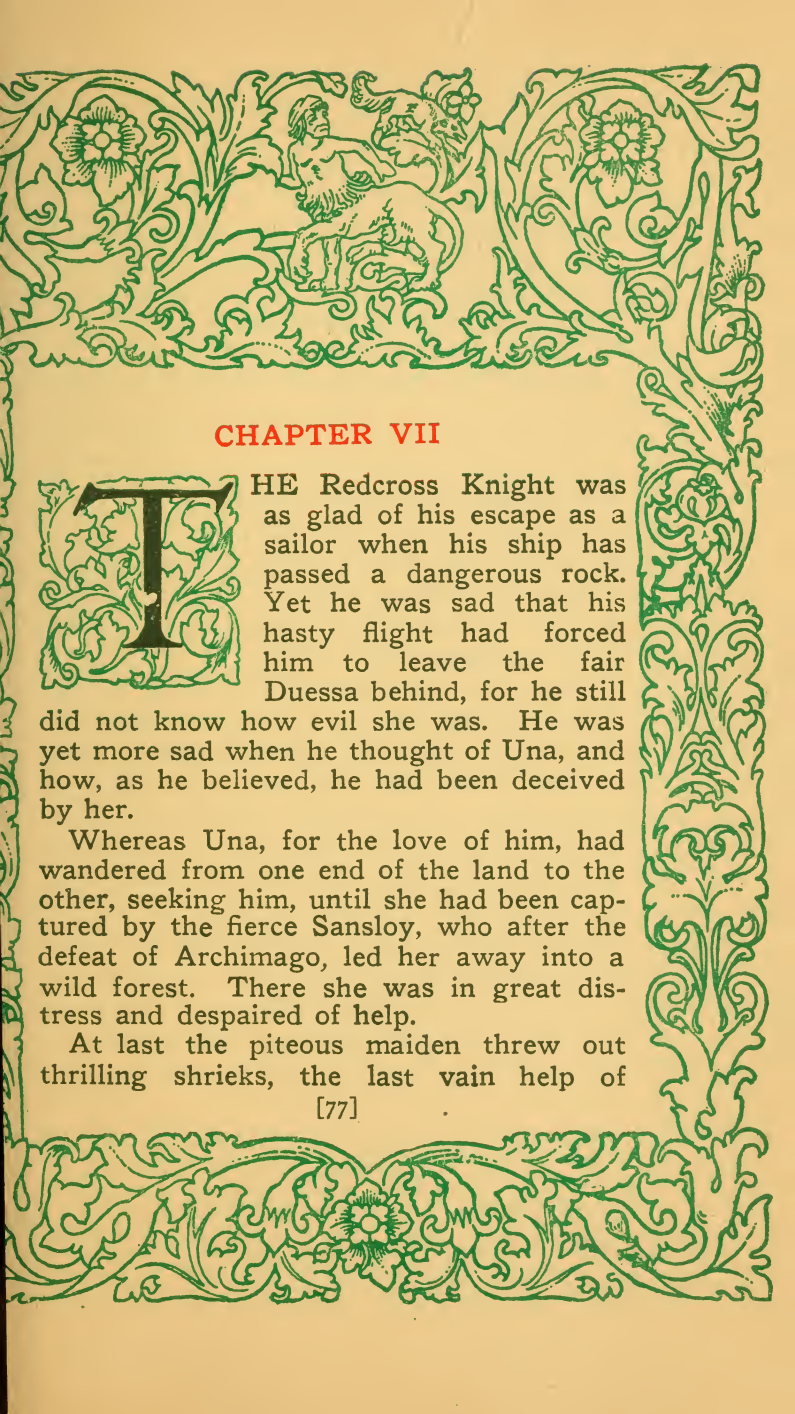


CHAPTER VII.

UNA, HAVING BEEN CARRIED OFF BY SANSLOY, IS RESCUED BY THE WOOD-FOLK.—SHE LIVES WITH THEM A WHILE.—SIR SATYRANE COMES TO HER HELP.—HE FIGHTS WITH SANSLOY.—UNA ESCAPES.







CHAPTER VII

THE Redcross Knight was as glad of his escape as a sailor when his ship has passed a dangerous rock. Yet he was sad that his hasty flight had forced him to leave the fair Duessa behind, for he still did not know how evil she was. He was yet more sad when he thought of Una, and how, as he believed, he had been deceived by her.

Whereas Una, for the love of him, had wandered from one end of the land to the other, seeking him, until she had been captured by the fierce Sansloy, who after the defeat of Archimago, led her away into a wild forest. There she was in great distress and despaired of help.

At last the piteous maiden threw out thrilling shrieks, the last vain help of

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woman's great distress, and with loud complaints prayed the skies. But the eternal Providence can make a way where none appears. A wondrous way was made for this Lady, when the Lion came to her help. And now her shrill outcries and shrieks resounded through all the woods and forests. And it chanced that a troop of wild wood-people, the Fauns and Satyrs, were dancing round far away within the wood, while their god Sylvanus slept soundly in a shady arbor. When they heard that piteous voice, they forsook in haste their rural mirth to learn what wight lamented so loudly. They came running to the place.

And when the Saracen saw these rude, misshapen folk, whose like he had never seen before, he dared not tarry, but got upon his ready steed and began to rapidly ride away. These wild folk found the virgin doleful and desolate, with ruffled garments, and fair face wet with tears, as her foe had left her. They stood amazed at so sad a sight, and began to pity her unhappy state. They stood astonished at her bright beauty, so undeserving, in their rude eyes, of such a plight.

She was more amazed than they, and trembled for fear. She had such a fit of



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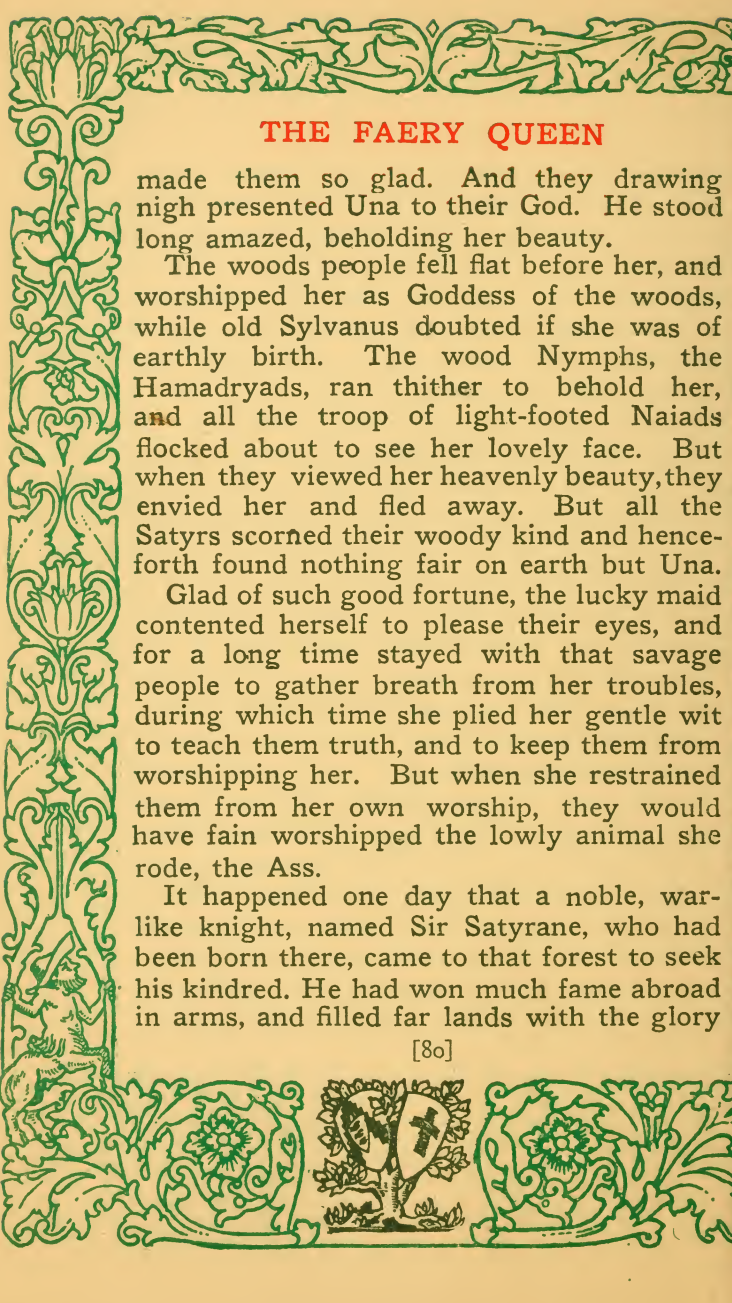
trembling, and spoke no word, so that the savage folk felt her pain and read her sorrow in her sad face. Though their foreheads were clad with rough horns, they gently smiled, and, to put away her fear, they bent their knees to show that they would obey her. She was uncertain whether she could trust herself to them or no. But they, in pity for her tender youth, and wondering at her beauty, fell upon the lowly plain and kissed her feet.

Their hearts she guessed by these acts, and she fearlessly rose from the ground and walked among them without suspicion. They were as glad as birds at dawn, and led her forth, dancing about her, shouting and singing shepherds' songs, strewing the ground with green branches, and crowning her with an olive garland, they worshipped her as their Queen.

Sounding their merry pipes, so that the woods rang with the echo, wearing the ground with their horny feet, they leaped like lambs in the Springtime. So they brought her toward their old god, Sylvanus, who, wakened from his sleep, came out to learn the cause of the noise. Leaning upon his cypress staff, and with his waist girt about with ivy, he came wondering what

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made them so glad. And they drawing nigh presented Una to their God. He stood long amazed, beholding her beauty.

The woods people fell flat before her, and worshipped her as Goddess of the woods, while old Sylvanus doubted if she was of earthly birth. The wood Nymphs, the Hamadryads, ran thither to behold her, and all the troop of light-footed Naiads flocked about to see her lovely face. But when they viewed her heavenly beauty, they envied her and fled away. But all the Satyrs scorned their woody kind and henceforth found nothing fair on earth but Una.

Glad of such good fortune, the lucky maid contented herself to please their eyes, and for a long time stayed with that savage people to gather breath from her troubles, during which time she plied her gentle wit to teach them truth, and to keep them from worshipping her. But when she restrained them from her own worship, they would have fain worshipped the lowly animal she rode, the Ass.

It happened one day that a noble, war-like knight, named Sir Satyrane, who had been born there, came to that forest to seek his kindred. He had won much fame abroad in arms, and filled far lands with the glory

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of his deeds. He was plain, faithful, true, and ever loved to fight for the rights of ladies, but he took no pleasure in vain-glorious battles. He was a Satyr's son, born in the wild forest; but his mother was a Lady, who was bound in sacred wedlock to Therion, a loose, unruly swain, who had more joy to range the wide forest and chase the savage beast than serve his Lady.

He was nursed in the wild life and manners among wild beasts and woods. He was taught to banish fear and cowardice, and forced to put his trembling hand upon the Lion and the rugged Bear, and to tear her cubs from the Bear's den, and to tame wild Bulls and ride their backs, and to overtake the Roebucks in their flight, so that every beast flew from him in fear. Thereby he grew so fearless that his own sire often trembled before him. And to prove his power he complied wild beasts to work under iron yokes. He had such joy to tame their stubborn hearts.

His loving mother, who had been sent away, when he was a child, to her own home, came one day into the woods to see her little son, and chanced to meet him in the way when he was carrying a Lion's cubs in his rugged arms, and lulling them with-



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out fear, and after him the Lioness was running, roaring with rage. His timid mother quaked with fear, and turning back began to flee, until he called her kindly and persuaded her to stay. And then she began with these womanish words to say, "Oh, Satyrane, my darling, and my joy, leave off for love of me this dreadful play. It is not fit to dally thus with death. Go find some other play-fellow.

In these delights, he was trained until he reached riper years. Then his heart desired to be known by foreign foes, and he sought far abroad for strange adventures. Yet evermore it was his custom, after long labors and adventures to repair to his native woods, to see his sire. And now he had come thither for this purpose, when he found the fair Una, a strange Lady, teaching the Satyrs, who sat around her, true, holy learning, from her sweet lips.

He wondered at her fair, heavenly wisdom, such as he had never known in women, and began to admire her and pity her sorrows. He blamed fortune, which put such troubles upon a gentle Lady, who was so harmless and true. Thenceforth he kept her goodly company, and learned from her faith and truth. But she, being vowed to



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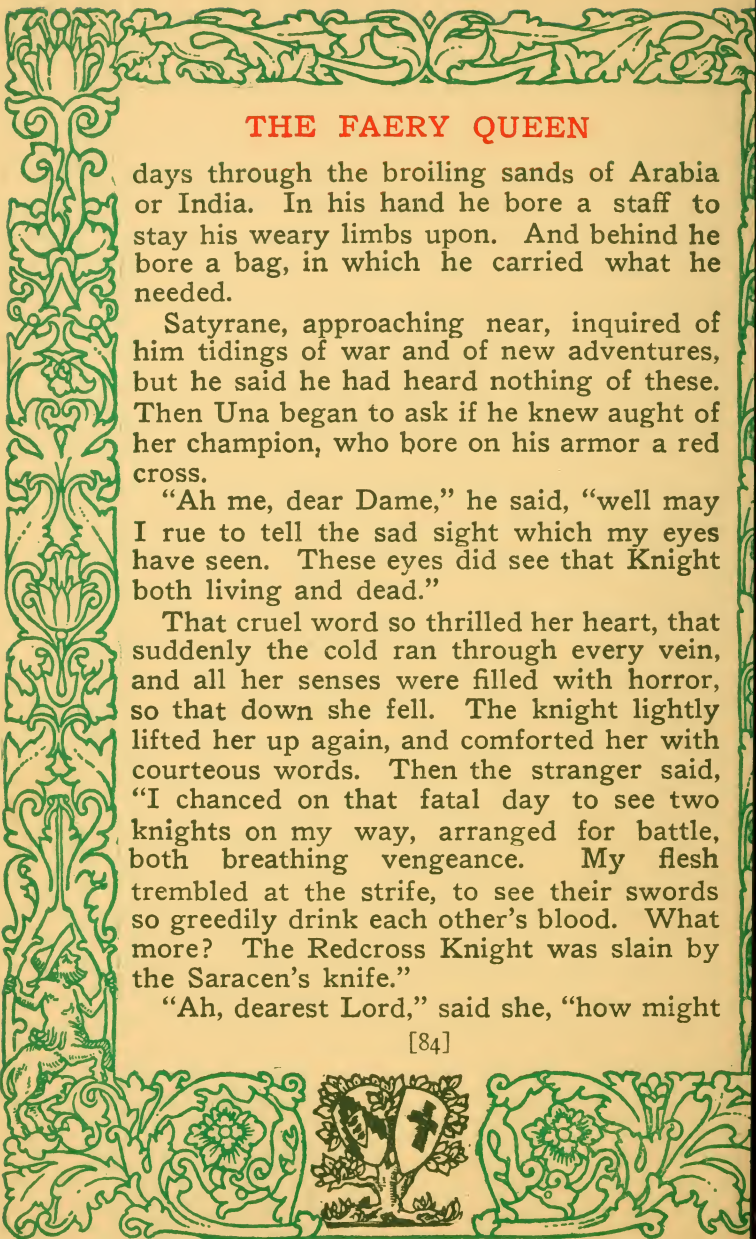
the Redcross Knight, ever lamented his perils, nor could delight in a new acquaintance. But she tormented her dear heart, and spent all her wit secretly to know how to escape from that wood.

At last she secretly told Satyrane her desire, and he, glad to please her, began to plan how he might take that passive maid away. So on a day when all the Satyrs were gone to do homage to old Sylvanus, their god, he with stout, bold heart led away the gentle virgin, who had been left behind. So fast he carried her that they were soon past the woods and came to the open plain.

They had travelled now the greater part of the day, when they spied a weary man wandering by the way, and toward him they began to ride hastily to learn what news had happened abroad, or to get tidings of the Redcross Knight. But he, spying them, began to turn aside, as if he feared them. But they rode fast, and soon crossed his path. He seemed a silly man, and was dressed in simple old clothes, soiled by the dust of the long way. His sandals were torn with toilsome travel, and his face was tanned with the scorching rays of the sun, as if he had travelled many hot

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days through the broiling sands of Arabia or India. In his hand he bore a staff to stay his weary limbs upon. And behind he bore a bag, in which he carried what he needed.

Satyrane, approaching near, inquired of him tidings of war and of new adventures, but he said he had heard nothing of these. Then Una began to ask if he knew aught of her champion, who bore on his armor a red cross.

"Ah me, dear Dame," he said, "well may I rue to tell the sad sight which my eyes have seen. These eyes did see that Knight both living and dead."

That cruel word so thrilled her heart, that suddenly the cold ran through every vein, and all her senses were filled with horror, so that down she fell. The knight lightly lifted her up again, and comforted her with courteous words. Then the stranger said, "I chanced on that fatal day to see two knights on my way, arranged for battle, both breathing vengeance. My flesh trembled at the strife, to see their swords so greedily drink each other's blood. What more? The Redcross Knight was slain by the Saracen's knife."

"Ah, dearest Lord," said she, "how might

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that be, when he was the stoutest knight who ever won a fight?"

"Ah, dearest Dame," he said, "yet this was done."

"Where," said Satyrane, "is that Saracen, that took from him life and from us joy?"

"He is not far away," he said, "I left him but late near a fountain, where he was washing his bloody wounds, that were cleft by the steel."

Therewith Satyrane marched forth in haste, while Una, oppressed with grief, could not follow fast for sorrow. And soon he came where the Saracen rested himself by the side of a fountain. And it was he who had oppressed the fair Una. When Satyrane saw him, he boldly defied him with reproachful words, saying, "Arise, thou cursed Miscreant, who dost boast that thou hast slain the good Knight of the Redcross. Arise and maintain thy guilty wrong, or else yield to me."

The Saracen, hearing this, arose at once, and catching up his shield, and helmet, buckled himself for the field. And drawing near, he said, "In an evil hour your foes sent you here to punish another's wrongs. Yet you blame me ill. The Redcross Knight I never slew, but had he been behind the



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shield I thought was his, the enchanter Archimago would not rue his error. But you, I hope, shall prove his error true."

Therewith they began furiously to thunder blows, and fiercely to assail each other. They were so bent to quell each his foe that with their force they pierced their armor and made wide furrows in their flesh, that any living eye would have pitied. So long they fought, pursuing revenge, that they were compelled to take time to breathe and then, refreshed, they renewed the battle.

So fiercely when these knights had breathed once, did they return to the fight, increasing their force and cruel rage with mighty strokes, that with their dreadful wounds and bloody gore they both could scarcely be known.

By this, the sad Una, led by their noise, arrived where they had sown the earth with their blood. And her, when the proud Saracen spied, he left the battle hastily to catch her, newly offered to his eye. But Satyrane turned him with his strokes, and sternly bade him ply other business than hunting the steps of a maid. Then the Saracen cried, "O, foolish man, what mad fury has led you to your fate? Were it not



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better that I had the Lady than that you should repent too late? Senseless man to hate himself. Lo, then for your aid, take this lover's token on your head."

So they return to fight, while the royal Maid fled far away, through fear of that proud Saracen.

But that false stranger, who told of the death of the Redcross Knight, was indeed Archimago, and he stayed in the shadow and much rejoiced in the bloody fight. But when he saw the damsel pass away, he left his place and pursued her in hope to yet bring her to her end.



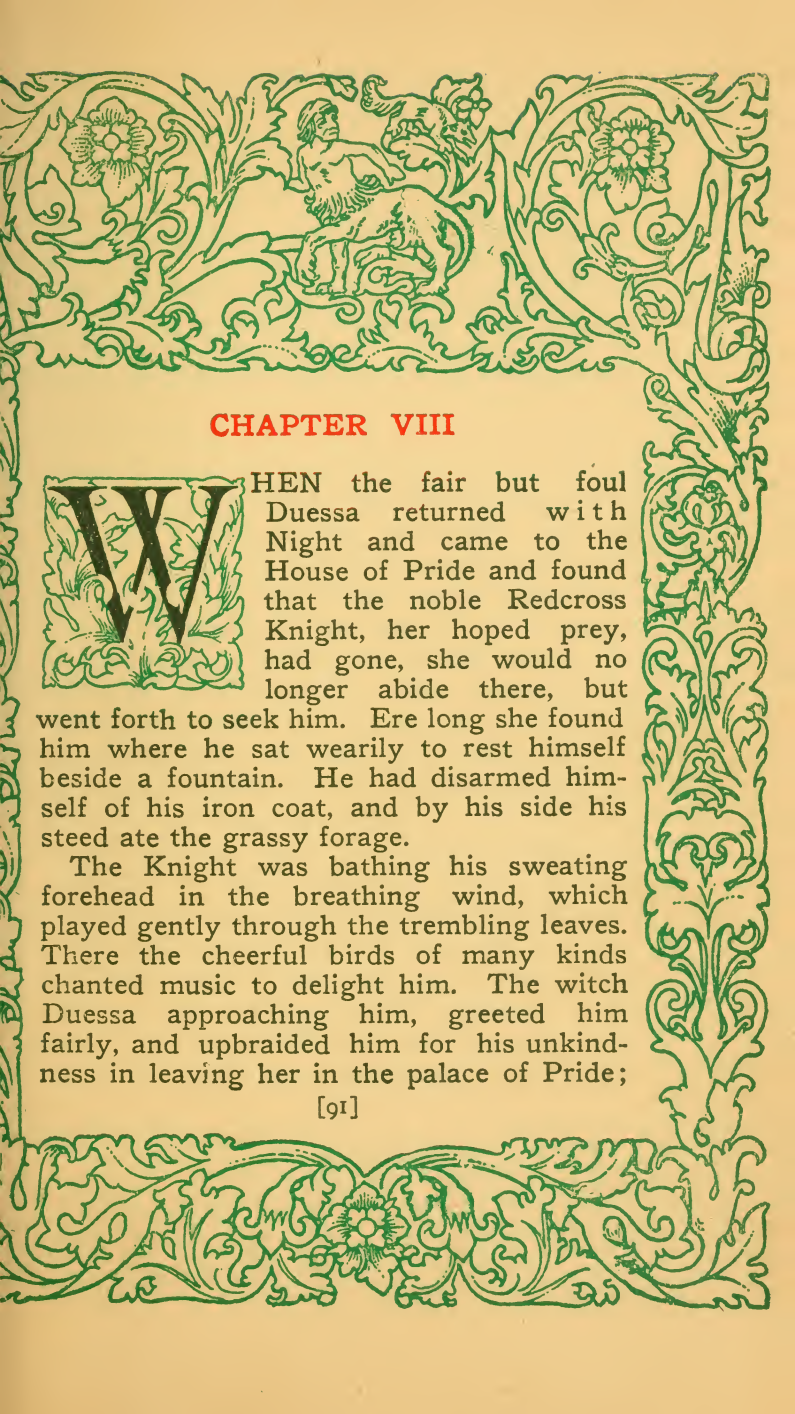


CHAPTER VIII.

THE REDCROSS KNIGHT DRINKS OF A FOUNTAIN THAT WEAKENS HIM. — HE BATTLES WITH A GIANT AND IS OVERCOME. — HE IS CAST INTO PRISON. — THE DWARF CARRIES THE NEWS TO UNA. — UNA — MEETS PRINCE ARTHUR, WHO PROMISES TO FREE HER KNIGHT.







CHAPTER VIII

WHEN the fair but foul Duessa returned with Night and came to the House of Pride and found that the noble Redcross Knight, her hoped prey, had gone, she would no longer abide there, but went forth to seek him. Ere long she found him where he sat wearily to rest himself beside a fountain. He had disarmed himself of his iron coat, and by his side his steed ate the grassy forage.

The Knight was bathing his sweating forehead in the breathing wind, which played gently through the trembling leaves. There the cheerful birds of many kinds chanted music to delight him. The witch Duessa approaching him, greeted him fairly, and upbraided him for his unkindness in leaving her in the palace of Pride;

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but she mixed fair words with harsh ones. Then forgetting unkindness, they began to talk of pleasant things and to bathe in the joyous shade, which shielded them from the boiling heat and decked with green boughs the fountain, as with a garland.

The bubbling waves of this fountain welled up freshly always, nor ever were dried up through the fervent summer; but the sacred Nymph, who was wont to dwell there, was under the displeasure of Diana.

The cause was this: one day when the fair Phœbe was following the chase with all her band, this Nymph, tired with the heat, sat down to rest in the midst of the race. The Goddess was angry, and to disgrace her bade the waters of her fountain to be like herself. Henceforth these waters were dull and slow, and all that drank of them became faint and feeble.

Of this the Redcross Knight knew nothing, and lying down upon the sand he drank of the stream, as clear as glass. And soon his manly force began to fail, and his mighty strength was turned to feebleness. Yet he still paid court to his Dame, careless of his health and of his fame. At last he heard a dreadful sound which bellowed



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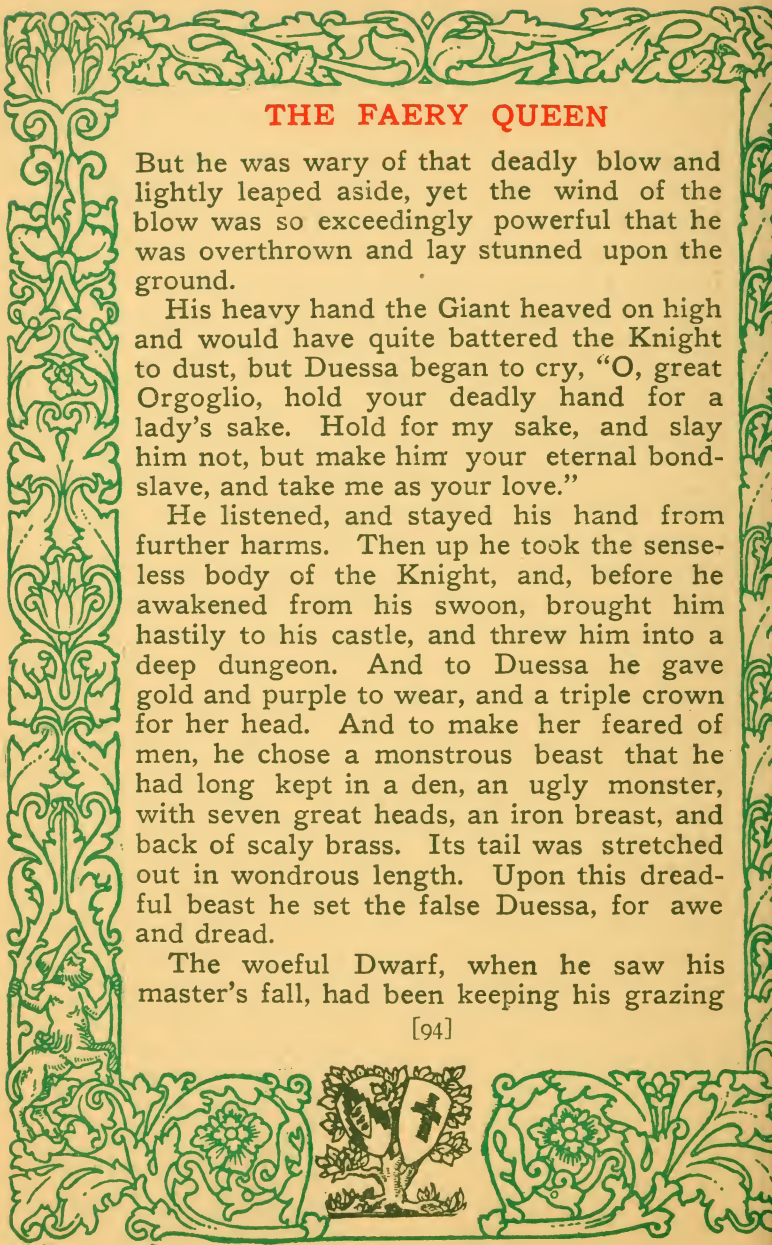
through the woods, so that the earth seemed to shake for terror, and the trees trembled. The Knight was therewith astonished, started up lightly, and began to take in hand his unready weapons.

But before he could deck himself with his armor or get his shield, his monstrous enemy, a hideous Giant, high and horrible, came stalking near with sturdy steps. With his tallness he seemed to threaten the sky, and the ground groaned under him for fear. His like no eye ever saw. His stature exceeded the height of three of the tallest men. The great Earth was his mother, and the wind Æolus was his sire. He was so big, and he was so proud of his high descent that he scorned all other powers and knighthood. He carried in his hand an oak tree, which he had torn up by the roots, and used it as his club.

When he spied the Knight, he began to advance with dreadful fury. The Knight in vain ran to array himself for battle, but he was disarmed, disgraced, and inwardly dismayed, and so faint in every joint, through using the waters of that fountain, that he could scarcely wield his sword. The Giant struck at him so mercilessly, that his blow would have overthrown a tower.

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But he was wary of that deadly blow and lightly leaped aside, yet the wind of the blow was so exceedingly powerful that he was overthrown and lay stunned upon the ground.

His heavy hand the Giant heaved on high and would have quite battered the Knight to dust, but Duessa began to cry, "O, great Orgoglio, hold your deadly hand for a lady's sake. Hold for my sake, and slay him not, but make him your eternal bond-slave, and take me as your love."

He listened, and stayed his hand from further harms. Then up he took the senseless body of the Knight, and, before he awakened from his swoon, brought him hastily to his castle, and threw him into a deep dungeon. And to Duessa he gave gold and purple to wear, and a triple crown for her head. And to make her feared of men, he chose a monstrous beast that he had long kept in a den, an ugly monster, with seven great heads, an iron breast, and back of scaly brass. Its tail was stretched out in wondrous length. Upon this dreadful beast he set the false Duessa, for awe and dread.

The woeful Dwarf, when he saw his master's fall, had been keeping his grazing

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horse. When the valiant Knight was cast into the prison, the Dwarf took his mighty armor, his silver shield, his sharp spear, and departed with them to tell his friends of his distress. He had not travelled long, when on the way he met the sad Una fleeing from the Saracen, while Satyrane kept him from pursuit. When Una set her eyes on the Dwarf, and saw him travelling alone with the armor of his master, she fell to the ground, knowing some great misfortune had happened to the Redcross Knight.

The Dwarf was sad at the unhappy news he must tell, but he recovered heart and rubbed her temples, and raised her thrice from her swoons. At last with faltering tongue, she bade him tell the woeful tale. Then the Dwarf declared the whole story of the subtle tricks of Archimago: he told how Duessa had been taken from the vanquished Saracen; of the wretched pair turned into trees; of the House of Pride and the perils thereof; of the combat with Sansjoy; and of the conflict with the Giant, who had made the Knight his captive.

Una heard all this with patience to the end, but her heart was almost rent in twain. At last she rose up, resolving to find her Knight alive or dead. And forward they



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went, as the Dwarf pointed out the way. High over the hills and low down in the valleys, she wandered.

At last she chanced by good fortune to meet a goodly knight, who was marching by the way, and with him was his squire, fitly arrayed. His armor shone far off, like the brightest rays of the sun. From top to toe no point was exposed that could be pierced by the steel of an enemy. Across his breast he wore a brave belt, that shone like stars with rare and precious stones. And in the midst thereof was one precious stone of wondrous worth, shaped like a lady's head. By his belt hung his deadly sword, in an ivory shield, carved curiously; the hilt was burnished gold, and the handle mother of pearl. His haughty helmet was all gold, causing terror because of its brightness; on the crest was a Dragon, with greedy paws, and over it all were spread its golden wings; its head, close couched on the beaver, seemed to throw red sparks from its flaming mouth; and the scaly tail was stretched low down his back.

Upon the top of his lofty crest was a bunch of many colored hairs, sprinkled with pearls and gold, and this shook and danced as if for jollity.

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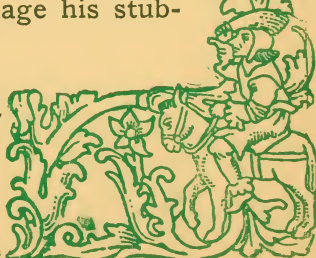
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His warlike shield was all closely covered, nor might be seen by mortal eye. It was not made of steel, nor of enduring brass, as such earthly metals are soon rusted away; but it was framed of one mighty Diamond, perfect and pure, so that no point of a spear could pierce it, nor blow of sword divide it. This, its owner, who was the great Prince Arthur, never revealed to any foe, unless he would dismay some huge monster, or daunt whole armies, and then he would use it to terrify them. No magic arts had any power over it; and all things that were not what they seemed faded away before that shield. And when he would confound rascals, he could by its means turn men into stone and stones into dust, and dust to nothing. And when he would subdue the proud, he would blind them by the sight of it, or change them into other colors.

This shield, with the sword and armor, were made for Prince Arthur by Merlin, who excelled all men in magic.

A gentle youth, his dearly loved squire, bore behind him his spear of ebony, whose head, three times heated in the flames, had riven many a breast. He was a goodly person, who could fairly manage his stub-

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born steed with a curbed bit, that chafed that any should sit on his back.

When Arthur drew near to this Lady, he began to greet her courteously, and when he heard her unwilling answers he saw that some secret sorrow distressed her heart. And to calm her pain, he spoke fair, feeling words fitted to her humor, to tempt her to tell the cause of her sorrow.

His goodly reason and his well-guided speech settled so deeply in her gracious thought, that she was persuaded to disclose the hurt that love and fortune had made in her heart, and she said, "Fair Sir, I hope good fortune has brought you to inquire the secret of my grief, or that your wisdom may direct me, or your courage yield me relief. Then hear my sad story."

Then she told Arthur that she was the daughter of a great queen and king whose cruel enemy, a huge great Dragon, had ravaged their land, and forced her parents to flee for safety into a strong castle with mighty brass walls, where he had kept them besieged now for four years. She said that many knights had come to slay this monster, but they had all failed in this hard achievement. At last she had been led by their fame to seek the help of some

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of the doughty knights that lived in Fairy land, and she had gone to the court of Gloriana, to obtain some such redoubted knight, that he might deliver her dear parents from their tyrant's power. There she had found a fresh, unproved knight, whose manly hands had never been imbued in blood, but that he had since shown his prowess in many a bloody fight. She said that the armor and weapons that the Dwarf bore could tell his deeds. She had hoped from his fair beginnings that he could redeem her captives, till an Enchanter had deceived him and made him doubt her loyalty, so that he henceforth forsook her and left her to wander where wild fortune led her. He had taken himself by other ways, in which he met the false Duessa, her only foe, who with her witchcraft had inveigled him to follow her. At last Duessa had betrayed him and thrown him as captive into a dungeon. "This is my cause of grief," she said, "more great than may be told."

Before she had ended she began to faint, but Arthur comforted her and said, "Truly, Madame, you have great cause for grief, that would cause the stoutest heart to quake. But be of good cheer, and take



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comfort, for I will not forsake you till I have freed your captive Knight."

His cheerful words revived her spirits, so they went on their journey, the Dwarf showing them the way.

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CHAPTER IX.

PRINCE ARTHUR BATTLES WITH THE GIANT AND SLAYS HIM.—HE DELIVERS THE REDCROSS KNIGHT FROM PRISON AND RESTORES HIM TO UNA.—THEY UNMASK THE WITCH DUESSA AND DRIVE HER AWAY.







CHAPTER IX

THEY sadly travelled thus until they came near a strong and high castle, when the Dwarf cried, "Lo, yonder is the place, in which my lord lies captive to that Giant's tyranny. Therefore, dear sir, try your mighty powers."

The noble knight by-and-by alighted from his lofty steed, and bade the Lady wait there to see the end of the fight. So, with his Squire, Arthur marched toward the castle, whose gates he found shut fast, with no one to guard them nor to answer a call.

Then the Squire took the bugle that hung in twisted gold and gay tassels by his side. Great wonders of that horn were told. No man ever heard that sound but he trembled in every vein. Three miles around it might

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easily be heard, and three echoes answered again. No false enchantment might once abide the terror of that blast. There was no gate so strong, no lock so fast and firm but would burst or fly open with that piercing noise.

The same he blew before the Giant's gate, so that all the castle quaked from the ground, and every door flew open of its own free will. The Giant himself was dismayed with that sound, and in haste came rushing from an inner room, with staring, stern countenance, and staggering steps, to know what sudden peril had dared his dreaded power.

And after him the proud Duessa came, high mounted on her many-headed beast, every head flaming with a fiery tongue, and his mouth bloody from a late feast. And when the knight beheld him, he soon placed his mighty shield upon his manly arm and flew fiercely at him, filled with courage and thrilling eagerness in every limb.

Therewith the Giant buckled him to fight, inflamed with a scornful wrath, and lifting up his dreadful club on high, all armed with ragged knots, he thought to have slain him at the first encounter. But the noble prince was wise and wary, and



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leaped lightly aside from so monstrous a blow, for he could not endure such a thunderbolt. Nor was it shame to shun such hideous force. The dire stroke, missing its mark, fell to the ground, and was so deeply driven into the clay that it ploughed up a furrow three yards deep. The earth groaned underneath the blow, and trembled with strange fear as from an earthquake.

His boisterous club was so buried in the ground that the Giant could not lightly lift it up again; and the Knight found his foe at disadvantage. And while he strove to get his club out of the earth, Arthur with his sword, all burning bright, smote off his left arm, which fell like a block to the earth. Large streams of blood gushed forth like waters from a riven rock. Dismayed with so desperate a wound, and angry at the unwonted pain, he loudly brayed, so that all the fields rebellowed again.

And when his dear Duessa heard this noise, and saw the evil blow that endangered her lord, she hastily drew to his aid her dreadful beast. He came ramping forth, and threatened with all his heads as if they were fiery brands. But the Squire fiercely encountering him with his single sword, made him quickly retreat, and

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stood between him and Arthur like a bulwark.

The proud Duessa, full of wrath at being affronted so, forced her beast forward with all her power that he might cast down this man out of the way, for she scorned to be stopped by so unequal a foe. But that courageous Squire would not yield her passage to go against his lord, but with terrible strokes restrained him, and barred the way with his body.

Then the angry witch took her golden cup, which she carried filled with magic stuff, death and despair and secret poison. And when she had said some magic words, she lightly sprinkled this upon the Squire, so that his senses were dismayed with sudden fear. So down he fell before the cruel beast, who seized on his neck with his bloody claws and nearly crushed the life out of his panting breast. He had no power to stir nor will to rise.

This when Prince Arthur saw he lightly left the Giant with whom he fought, and turned his enterprise toward the beast, for great anguish was in his heart to see his beloved Squire brought to such peril. And high advancing his blood-thirsty blade he struck one of the deformed heads of the

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dragon, tearing his monstrous scalp down to his teeth. A sea of blood gushed from the gaping wound, that stained Duessa's gay garments with filthy gore and overflowed all the field, where Arthur waded in blood over his shoes.

Whereat the Dragon roared for exceeding pain and, whipping the empty air with his great tail, he would have cast down his gorgeous rider from her lofty place, had not the Giant helped her; for he, enraged with pain and frantic wrath, came rushing up and forced Arthur to retire. Then putting all his force into his one hand, he lifted his club aloft and smote at his foe with such furious strength that he would have overthrown the strongest oak. The stroke alighted upon Arthur's shield, so that it doubled him low to the ground. And in his fall, his shield, that had been covered, lost its veil and flew open. The light of it was brighter than the sun; such blazing brightness flew through the air that no eye could endure the sight. Which when the Giant saw, he let his arm fall down, and withdrew his weapon that was lifted on high to have slain the man that lay on the ground.

Also the many-headed beast, amazed at



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the flashing beams of that sunny shield, became stark blind so that down he tumbled on the earth and seemed to submit himself as conquered. When his proud mistress saw him fall, she cried loudly to the Giant, "O! help, Orgoglio, help or we perish."

At her piteous cry her stout champion was much moved, and to aid his friend he tried his angry weapon, but all in vain, for he had met his end in that bright shield, and all his forces spent themselves in vain. Since he looked on that shield, he had no power to hurt nor to defend himself, more than when the Almighty's lightning brand dims the dazed eyes and terrifies the senses.

And when Prince Arthur addressed himself anew to the battle and threatened high his dreadful stroke, he blessed his sparkling blade about his head, and smote off the Giant's right leg by the knee, so that he tumbled down, like an aged tree falling from the top of a rocky hill, or a castle undermined from the foundation. Such was this Giant's fall, that seemed to shake the steadfast earth.

Then Arthur, lightly leaping on his prey, smote him again with his deadly steel, cutting his head from his unwieldy body. There he wallowed in his own foul, bloody

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gore, which flowed from his wounds in wondrous streams.

When the false Duessa saw his grievous fall, she cast her golden cup to the ground and threw her mitre rudely aside. Such piercing grief wounded her heart that she could not endure that sad blow, but leaving all behind her, turned to flee away. But the light-footed Squire quickly turned her about and brought her as a captive to his master.

When the royal virgin, Una, saw from afar the whole of this doubtful war, she came running fast to greet the conqueror with sober gladness and mild modesty. And with sweet, joyous face she spoke: "Fair branch of nobility, flower of chivalry, that have amazed the world with your worth, how shall I reward you for the pains you have suffered for my sake? And you, young Squire, fresh bud of virtue, whom these eyes saw near death's door, what has a poor virgin wherewith to reward you for such perils? Accept, therefore, my service evermore. And may God, who sees all things with equal eye, behold what you have done this day for me. But since the heavens have made you master of the field, may all end well. Nor do you let that wicked woman escape, for she it is that en-



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thralled my lord, and laid him in a deep dungeon, where he has wasted his days. Oh, hear how piteously he calls to you for help."

Forthwith, Arthur gave Duessa in charge of his Squire to keep her carefully while he himself with great desire entered forcibly into the castle, where he saw no living creature. Then he began to call loudly through the house, but no man answered to his cry; a solemn silence reigned.

At last there came forth with creeping pace an old, old man, whose beard was white as snow, who leaned on a staff and walked with feeble steps. His eyesight had failed him long ago. On his arm he bore a bunch of keys that were overgrown with rust. He was a very uncouth sight to behold, as he came forward with unsteady steps; for as he walked forward his face was turned backward. This was the ancient keeper of the castle, and the foster father of the dead Giant, and his name was Ignaro.

His gray hairs were honored by the knight, who gently asked him where all the people were who were used to live in that stately house, but the solemn old man answered only that he could not tell. Again he asked where the captive knight was kept; and again he said he could not tell.



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Then the Knight asked which way he might pass, but was given for reply only that he could not tell.

Thereat the courteous Arthur was displeased, and said, "Old sire, it seems you have not considered how unfit it is for gray hairs to mock or to be mocked. But if you are the old man you seem, I demand of you to answer me in more courteous way." His reply again was, he could not tell. This senseless speech, when the Prince had noted well, he guessed his nature by his face, and calmed his wrath, for he saw the old man was a dotard. Then stepping to him, he took the keys from his arm, and made himself free entrance. He opened each door, for there was no bar to stop him, nor any foe.

Within the rooms, he found all richly arrayed with arras and gold, and abounding with stores of everything that the greatest princes could desire. But all the floor was covered with the blood of innocent babes. Arthur sought through every room, but could find nowhere that woeful captive.

At last he came to an iron door that was locked fast, and found no key on that bunch to open it. But in the door was a little grating, through which he sent his voice,

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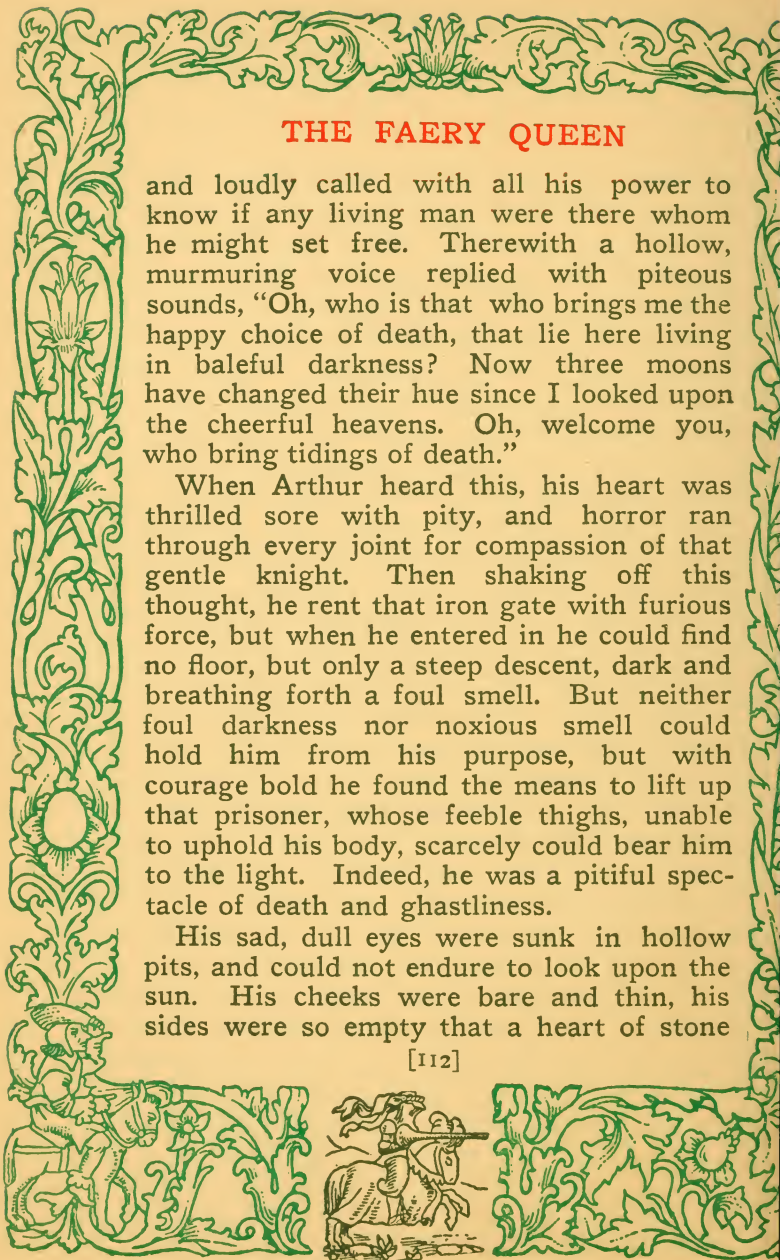


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and loudly called with all his power to know if any living man were there whom he might set free. Therewith a hollow, murmuring voice replied with piteous sounds, "Oh, who is that who brings me the happy choice of death, that lie here living in baleful darkness? Now three moons have changed their hue since I looked upon the cheerful heavens. Oh, welcome you, who bring tidings of death."

When Arthur heard this, his heart was thrilled sore with pity, and horror ran through every joint for compassion of that gentle knight. Then shaking off this thought, he rent that iron gate with furious force, but when he entered in he could find no floor, but only a steep descent, dark and breathing forth a foul smell. But neither foul darkness nor noxious smell could hold him from his purpose, but with courage bold he found the means to lift up that prisoner, whose feeble thighs, unable to uphold his body, scarcely could bear him to the light. Indeed, he was a pitiful spectacle of death and ghastliness.

His sad, dull eyes were sunk in hollow pits, and could not endure to look upon the sun. His cheeks were bare and thin, his sides were so empty that a heart of stone



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would have pitied him. His raw-boned arms, whose mighty muscles were wont to rive steel plates and hew helmets, were wasted away. All his vital forces were decayed, and his flesh was shrunk up like withered flowers.

And when his Lady saw him, she ran to him with joy. To see him made her glad, and yet she was sad to see his face so pale and wan, who formerly was clad in flowers of freshest youth. When she had wasted a well of tears, she said, "Ah, dearest lord, what evil star frowned on you, that you are thus robbed of yourself? But welcome now, my lord, in weal or woe, whose presence I have lacked too long. Fortune for these wrongs will pay penance of good. Good grows out of evil."

"Fair Lady," then said the victorious Arthur, "to do again the things that grieved breeds no delight. The good that grows from evils past is to be wise, and to beware of the like again. This day's example has written this dear lesson deep in my heart with an iron pen, that happiness does not abide with mortals. Henceforth, Sir Knight, regain your strength, and master your misfortunes with patient might. Lo, where your foes lie stretched

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before you. Lo, that wicked woman, who was the root of all your wretchedness, is now in your power, to let her live or die."

"To put her to death," said Una, "were wrong, and it were shame to take revenge upon so weak an enemy. But take from her her scarlet robes and let her go."

So, as she said, they took from that witch her royal robes and purple pall, and rich ornaments. And then she was seen to be a loathsome, wrinkled hag, ill-favored, old; a more ugly shape no living creature ever saw.

And when the knights beheld her, they were amazed, and wondered at her foul deformity. "Such then," said Una, "as she seems here, such is the face of falsehood. Such is foul Duessa when her borrowed light is taken away, and her real self known." Thus when they had shown her filthy features, they let her go at her own will, and wander into unknown ways. She fled fast to the wilderness, to hide her shame from living eyes, and lurked in rocks and caves.

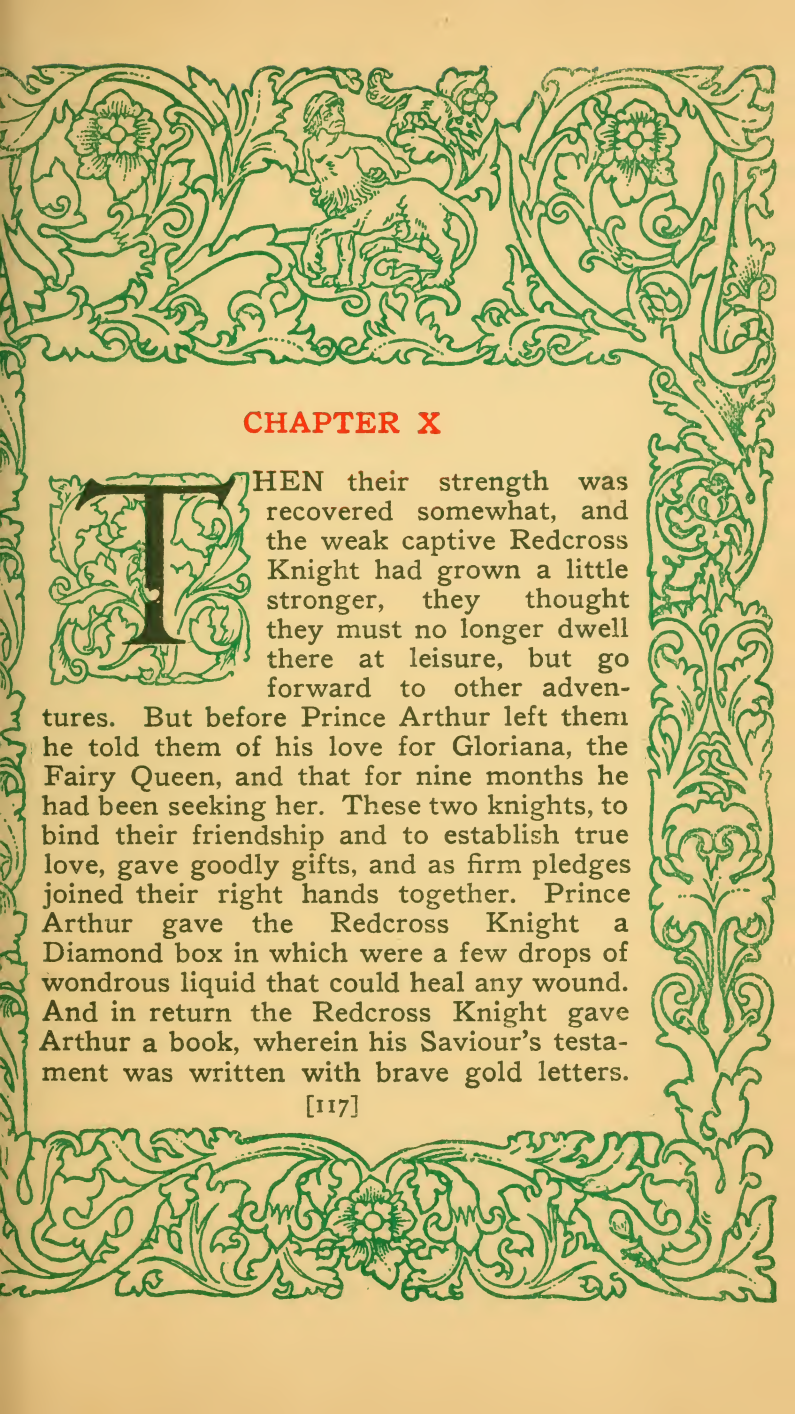
Then the knights and fair Una abode in that castle for a time, to rest themselves, and there they found great stores of rare dainties for their health.

CHAPTER X.

ST. GEORGE AND UNA NOW COME TO HER NATIVE LAND.—THE GREAT DRAGON ATTACKS THE KNIGHT.—ST. GEORGE IS TWICE OVERTHROWN, BUT IS HEALED BY A WELL AND A TREE.—ON THE THIRD DAY HE SLAYS THE DREADFUL DRAGON.







CHAPTER X

THEN their strength was recovered somewhat, and the weak captive Redcross Knight had grown a little stronger, they thought they must no longer dwell there at leisure, but go forward to other adventures. But before Prince Arthur left them he told them of his love for Gloriana, the Fairy Queen, and that for nine months he had been seeking her. These two knights, to bind their friendship and to establish true love, gave goodly gifts, and as firm pledges joined their right hands together. Prince Arthur gave the Redcross Knight a Diamond box in which were a few drops of wondrous liquid that could heal any wound. And in return the Redcross Knight gave Arthur a book, wherein his Saviour's testament was written with brave gold letters.

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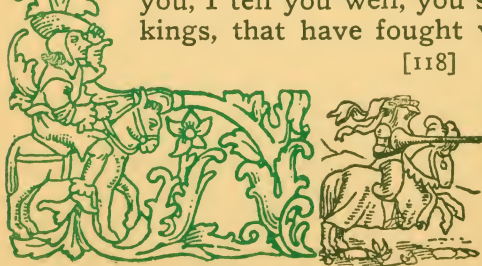
Thus they parted, Arthur going on his way to seek his love, and the other to fight with Una's foe. But Una, thinking of her Knight's shrunken sinews, would not bring him into a dreadful fight until he had recovered his former health.

And as they travelled, she brought him to an ancient house not far away, renowned throughout the world, where a wise matron dwelt whose only joy was to relieve the needs of wretched souls and aid the helpless poor. In this House of Holiness they dwelt awhile. And there in quiet and in reading the Redcross Knight gained strength and was comforted.

And there an aged man told him many curious things about the people from whom he sprang, and that he was of the English race, and descended from Saxon kings. He said, "Seek the path that I show, which shall after send you to heaven. And among the saints you shall be a saint, and the friend and patron of your own nation. You shall be called Saint George; Saint George of merry England, shall be the sign of victory.

"And since your cradle is unknown to you, I tell you well, you spring from Saxon kings, that have fought with mighty hand

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many bloody battles, and reared their royal throne in England. From thence a fairy took you while you slept and left her infant in your place. Then she brought you to Fairyland and hid you in a furrow. There a ploughman found you and brought you up in his home, until your courageous heart led you to the Fairy's court to seek fame."

"O holy sir," said St. George, "how shall I return your many favors? You have read aright my name and nation and taught me the way to heaven."

High time it now began to be for Una to think of her dear captive parents, and to repair their wasted kingdom. So they take leave of all in that house and ride away. And when they now approached near her native land, Una began to cheer with hearty words her Knight, and spoke in her modest manner, "Dear Knight, as dear as knight ever was, that have suffered these sorrows for my sake, may Heaven behold the toil you have taken for me. Now we are come unto my native soil, and to the place where all our perils are. Here haunts that fiend, and daily ravages. Therefore, be ever ready for your foeman. The spark of noble courage now awake, and strive to excel your excellent self. The battle you under-

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take shall evermore make you renowned above all knights on earth."

Then pointing with her hand, she said, "Lo, yonder is the brazen tower in which my dear parents are imprisoned through dread of the huge fiend. I see them from far appearing on the walls, the sight of whom greatly cheers my soul. And on the top of all I espy the watchmen, waiting to hear glad tidings. O my parents! may I bring to you ease of your misery."

With that, they heard a roaring, hideous sound that filled all the wide air with terror, and seemed to shake the earth. Soon they espied the dreadful Dragon, where he lay stretched upon the sunny side of a great hill, himself like a great hill. So soon as he saw from afar the glittering armor, he roused himself and hastened to them.

Then the Redcross bade his Lady to withdraw aside to a hill, from whence she might behold the battle and yet be safe from danger; so she obeyed him.

By this the dreadful Beast drew nigh to hand, half flying and half footing, and in his haste covering with his largeness much land and making a huge shadow, as a mountain overcasts a valley. Approaching near, he reared high his monstrous body,

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horrible and vast. He was armed over all with brazen scales, so that nothing could pierce them. Nor might his body be harmed with the blow of a sword, nor push of a spear. His wings were like two sails in which the wind is gathered. The feathers on his pinions were like main-yards. And when he chose to beat the air with his wings the clouds fled before him for terror.

His huge, long tail, wound up in a hundred folds, overspread his whole scaly back, and when he unfolded his tangled knots it swept all the land far behind him. At the point of the tail were fixed two stings, both deadly sharp, more so than the sharpest steel. But the sharpness of his cruel rending claws far exceeded his stings. That was surely dead that was touched by his ravenous feet.

But his most hideous head my tongue trembles to tell of, for his deep, devouring jaws gaped wide, through which could be seen a dark abyss. In either jaw three ranks of teeth were arranged; and to help kill his prey at once, a cloud of smothering smoke and sulphur steamed forth and filled all the air about. His blazing eyes were like two bright, shining shields, and they burned with wrath and sparkled living fire.

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So dreadfully did he pass toward the Knight, lifting aloft his speckled breast, and bounding over the bruised grass, as if for great joy, he welcomed this Knight. Soon he began to advance his haughty crest, and shake his scales, so that the Red-cross Knight almost quaked for dread. The Knight began fairly to couch his dreadful spear, and fiercely ran at him with might. The pointed steel would neither bite nor pierce his hard hide, but glanced off. Yet so moved was the wrathful beast with that powerful push, that he turned him lightly and as he passed by brushed with his long tail that horse and man to the ground.

But horse and man lightly rose up again, and the Knight addressed him to a fresh encounter, but the idle stroke recoiled back in vain. Exceeding rage inflamed the furious beast to be avenged, for never had he felt such wondrous force from the hand of any living man. Then with his waving wings displayed wide, he lifted himself up from the ground, and with his broad sails soared round above him. At last he stooped low and snatched up the man and horse to carry them quite away.

Long he bore them above the plain, as far as a bow may send an arrow, till strug-

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gling strong they at last forced him to let them down again. When the Knight was loose of his grip, he again tried to pierce with his spear through his brass-plated body. Three men's strength he put into the stroke. The stiff beam glanced from his scaly neck and glided close under his left wing, where it made a wide wound, so that the monster cried loudly from the hurt. He roared like the raging seas. The steel head stuck fast in his flesh until with his cruel claws he snatched the wood and broke it in two.

His hideous tail he then hurled about, and with it enwrapped the thighs of the foaming steed, that striving to unloose himself was forced to throw his rider. The Knight quickly rose from the earth, and fiercely took his sharp blade in hand, with which he struck so furiously that it seemed nothing could withstand the blow. But his hardened crest was so well armed that the sword could not make a dint. Yet the blow was so severe that the Dragon henceforth shunned to get the like again.

The Knight was vexed to see his stroke without effect, and smote again with more outrageous might, but back again the sparkling steel recoiled and left no mark.

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The beast, now smarting with his hurt, thought with his wings to get above the ground, but his wounded wing would not serve him for flight. Then full of grief he brayed aloud, and from the oven of his mouth he sent forth fire, that scorched the Knight's beard and burned his body through his armor, so that he wished to unlace his helmet.

Faint, weary, burned with heat, toil, wounds, he was tormented more than man ever was. He thought death better. The Dragon, when he saw his foe so dismayed, wished himself to breathe, and turning about struck him so strongly that he was felled to the ground. It happened fairly, that behind his back where he stood there was from ancient times a springing well, full of healing powers and good for medicine. In days before that Dragon got that happy land it was called the well of life. For it could cure those that were infected with sickness, and renew the aged. Into the same the Knight fell backward.

Now the sun began to set, when that monster, having cast his weary foe into that well, began to advance his broad, discolored breast and to clap his wings as a victor. Which when his sad Lady saw from



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afar, her soul was filled with great woe and sorrow, as thinking that sad war was at an end. And she began to pray to God to turn that end she feared away. With folded hands and knees low bent all night she watched, nor would lay down her weary limbs.

When the next morning did appear, the gentle virgin Una rose from her place and looked about, if she might spy her loved Knight.

At last she saw where he started bravely up out of the well, wherein he had lain drenched; and now he rose as if new-born, once more to try the battle.

Whom when the monster so fresh did spy he wondered at the sight, and doubted whether it were his late enemy or another man. The Redcross now to prove his renewed power, brandished on high his bright blade, and smote upon the monster's scalp so sore that he made a yawning wound to the bone; and the deadly blow dulled his senses. Whether the steel was hardened in that water, or the Knight had fresh strength, I know not, for till that time no man could harm that beast.

The cruel wound enraged him so, that he yelled aloud for exceeding pain. Then he began to toss aloft his tail, and beat the air.

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Nothing could stand before his strokes, for he overthrew high trees and broke rocks in pieces. Then, advancing with his tail high above his head, he intended to sting him with its sharp points. The mortal sting its angry needle shot quite through his shield, and seized his shoulder, where it stuck fast.

The Knight, striving to rise and loose the sting, found this vain. Then he drew his raging blade and struck so strongly that he cut five joints off the huge tail, and left but the stump. Then the beast filled the sky with his roars and with foul smoke and flashing fire. Then filled with wrath he gathered himself out of the mire and fiercely fell upon the sun-bright shield and gripped it fast.

Much was this man encumbered by this hold, and was in fear to lose his weapon, nor did he know how to unloose its folds. Three times he tried to draw it from its foot, but all in vain. Then when he saw he could not avail, he took his trusty sword wherewith he fiercely assailed his foe, and stoutly laid about him double blows so that fire flew from the iron. Therewith, he at last forced him to unloose one of his feet to use for his defence.

The other foot, fixed fast on the shield,

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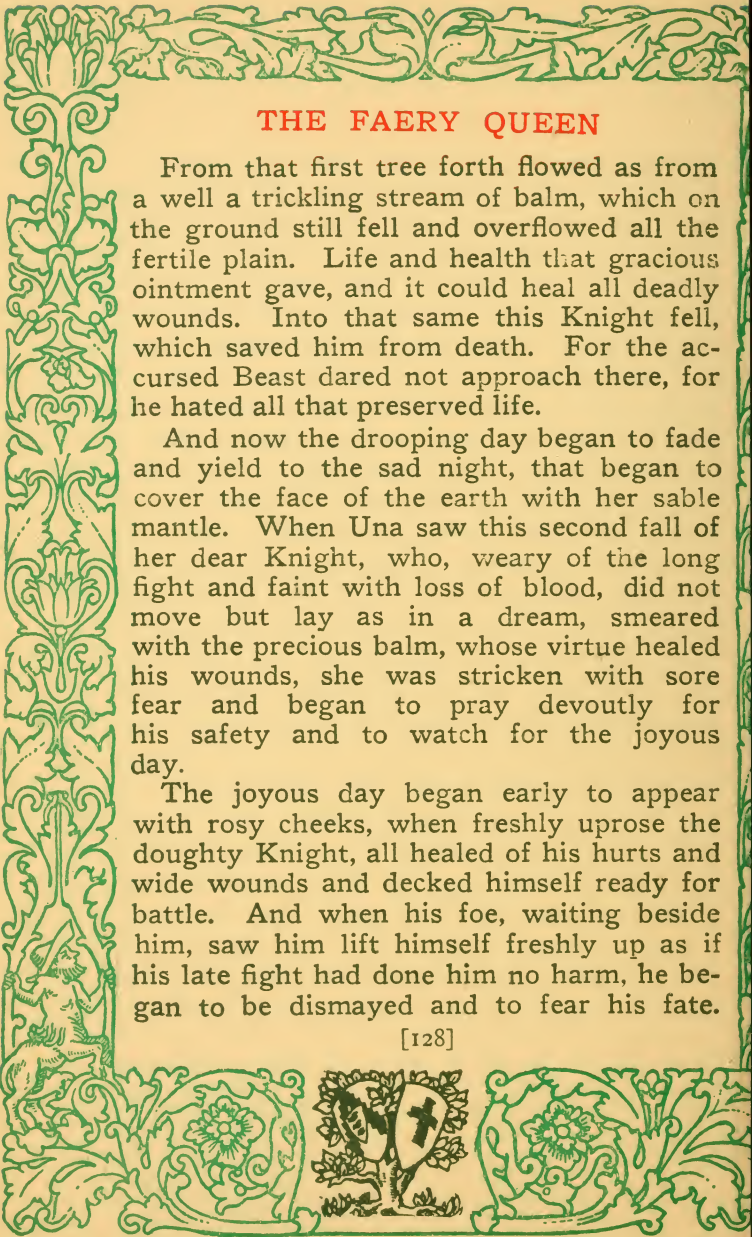
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no strength nor stroke could force him to unloose. He smote on that with all his might, until upon a joint the lucky steel did light, and made such way that hewed it quite in twain. For grief thereof the Dragon threw forth huge flames from his furnace, that dimmed heaven's light, covering it with dusky smoke and blue brimstone. The heat thereof so annoyed the Knight that it forced him to retire a little backward for his defence, to save his body from the scorching flames. It chanced as he recoiled backward, that his foot slipped in the mire and down he fell.

There grew a tree fairly beside him, laden with fruit and rosy apples, whereof great healing powers were declared. For happy life came to all who fed thereon, and even life everlasting. The great God had planted it in that blessed place with his Almighty hand, and called it the tree of life. In all the world the like of it was not to be found, save in that soil, where all good things grew, and it freely sprung out of the fruitful ground as uncorrupted nature sowed them, until that dread Dragon overthrew all. Another like fair tree also grew thereby, whereof whoever ate soon knew both good and evil.

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From that first tree forth flowed as from a well a trickling stream of balm, which on the ground still fell and overflowed all the fertile plain. Life and health that gracious ointment gave, and it could heal all deadly wounds. Into that same this Knight fell, which saved him from death. For the accursed Beast dared not approach there, for he hated all that preserved life.

And now the drooping day began to fade and yield to the sad night, that began to cover the face of the earth with her sable mantle. When Una saw this second fall of her dear Knight, who, weary of the long fight and faint with loss of blood, did not move but lay as in a dream, smeared with the precious balm, whose virtue healed his wounds, she was stricken with sore fear and began to pray devoutly for his safety and to watch for the joyous day.

The joyous day began early to appear with rosy cheeks, when freshly uprose the doughty Knight, all healed of his hurts and wide wounds and decked himself ready for battle. And when his foe, waiting beside him, saw him lift himself freshly up as if his late fight had done him no harm, he began to be dismayed and to fear his fate.

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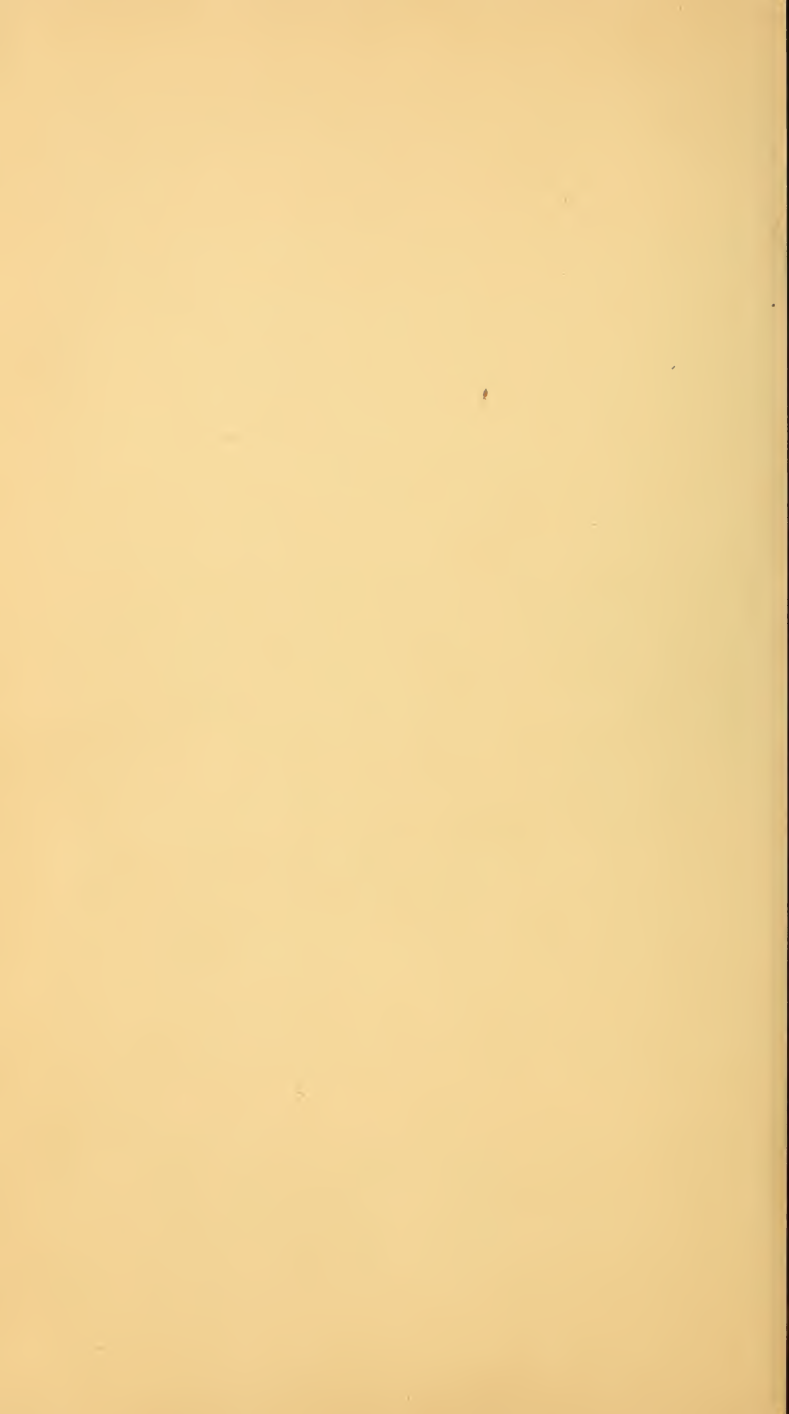
Nevertheless, he advanced near him with wonted rage.

And in his first encounter, gaping wide, he thought at once to have quite swallowed him, and rushed upon him outrageously. But the Knight encountered him fiercely. With his bright weapon, taking advantage of his open jaw, he ran through his mouth with such might that he pierced his dark, hollow maw, and retiring backward, drew forth his life blood.

So down he fell, and breathed forth his life, that vanished into smoke and swift clouds. So down he fell, so that the earth groaned under him, as if too feeble to bear so great a load. So down he fell, as a huge rocky cliff whose foundations have been washed away. So down he fell, and lay like a mountain.

The Knight himself even trembled at his fall, so huge and horrible a mass it seemed. And his dear Lady that beheld it, dared not approach lest she had not seen aright. But at last when she saw that the direful fiend did not stir, she shook off vain fright and drew nearer and saw that joyous end. Then she praised God, and thanked her faithful Knight that had achieved so great a conquest.

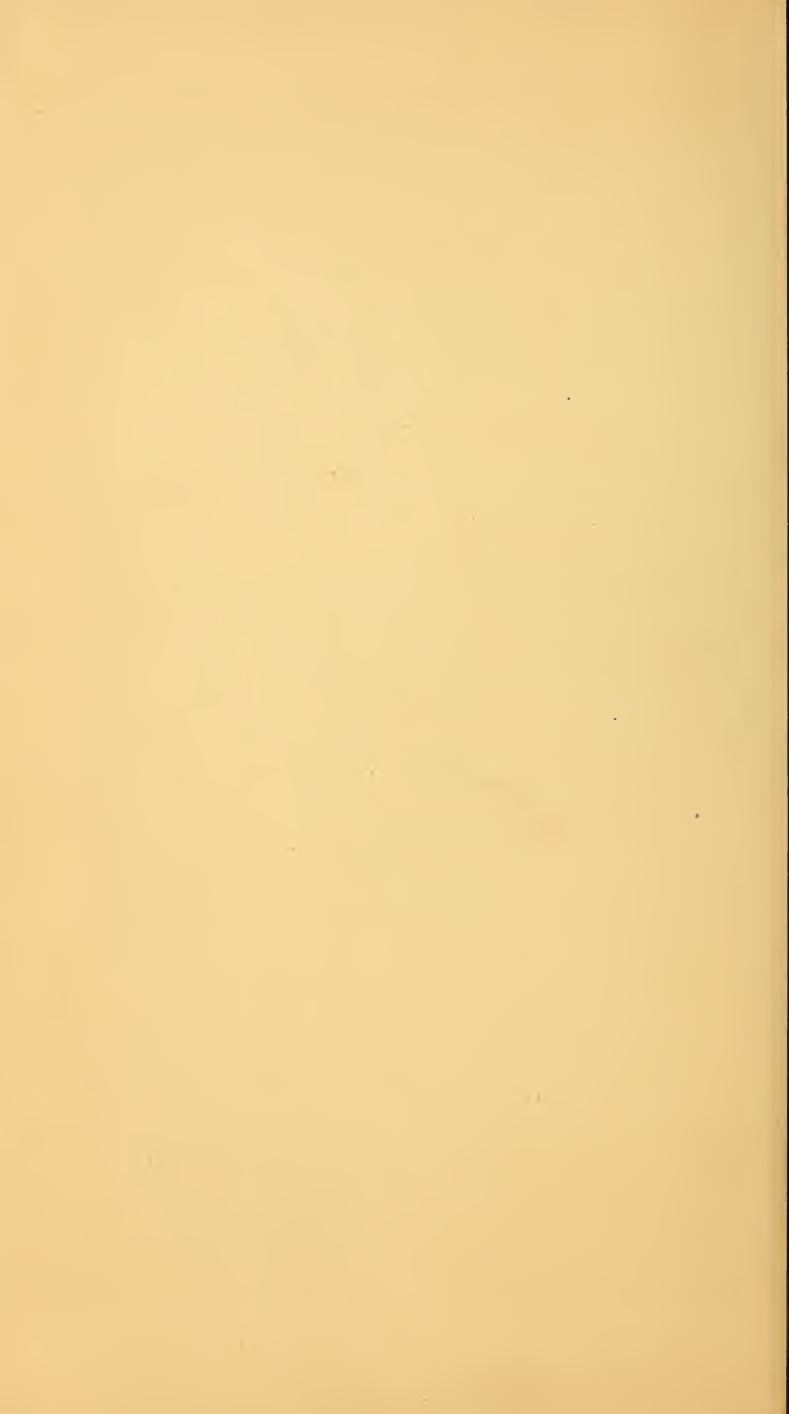


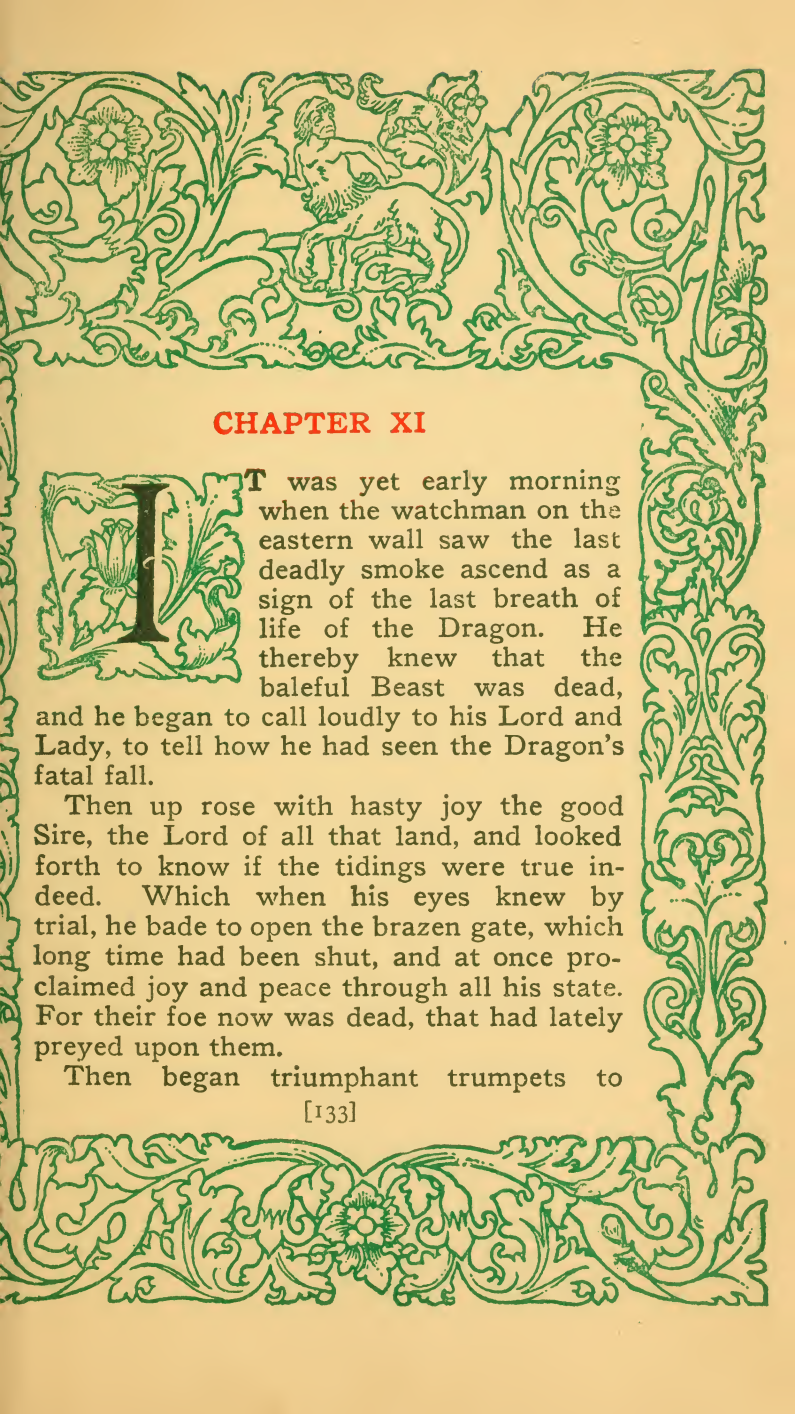


CHAPTER XI.

THE PARENTS OF UNA GREET HER AND ST. GEORGE WITH LOVE AND JOY.— DUESSA AND ARCHIMAGO FAIL IN THEIR LAST EFFORT TO DIVIDE THE KNIGHT AND HIS LADY.— THE JOYFUL MARRIAGE OF UNA AND ST. GEORGE.







CHAPTER XI

IT was yet early morning when the watchman on the eastern wall saw the last deadly smoke ascend as a sign of the last breath of life of the Dragon. He thereby knew that the baleful Beast was dead, and he began to call loudly to his Lord and Lady, to tell how he had seen the Dragon's fatal fall.

Then up rose with hasty joy the good Sire, the Lord of all that land, and looked forth to know if the tidings were true indeed. Which when his eyes knew by trial, he bade to open the brazen gate, which long time had been shut, and at once proclaimed joy and peace through all his state. For their foe now was dead, that had lately preyed upon them.

Then began triumphant trumpets to

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sound on high, that sent to heaven the report of their new joy, and the happy victory against him that had so long oppressed them and imprisoned them in a besieged fort. Then all the people, as in a solemn feast, assembled with one voice, rejoicing at the fall of the great beast, from whose eternal bondage they were now free.

Forth came that ancient Lord and aged Queen, arrayed in antique robes down to the ground. A noble crew waited about them of sage and sober peers, gravely dressed. There marched before them a goodly band of tall young men, all able to carry arms, but they now bore in their hands laurel branches, glad signs of victory and peace in all their land.

And they came to that doughty Conqueror prostrating themselves low before him, proclaiming him their Lord and Patron and throwing their laurel boughs at his feet. Soon after them, dancing in a row, came the comely virgins, decked with garlands, as fresh as flowers growing in green meadows; and in their hands they held on high sweet timbrels.

And before them the fry of young children played their wanton sports and child-



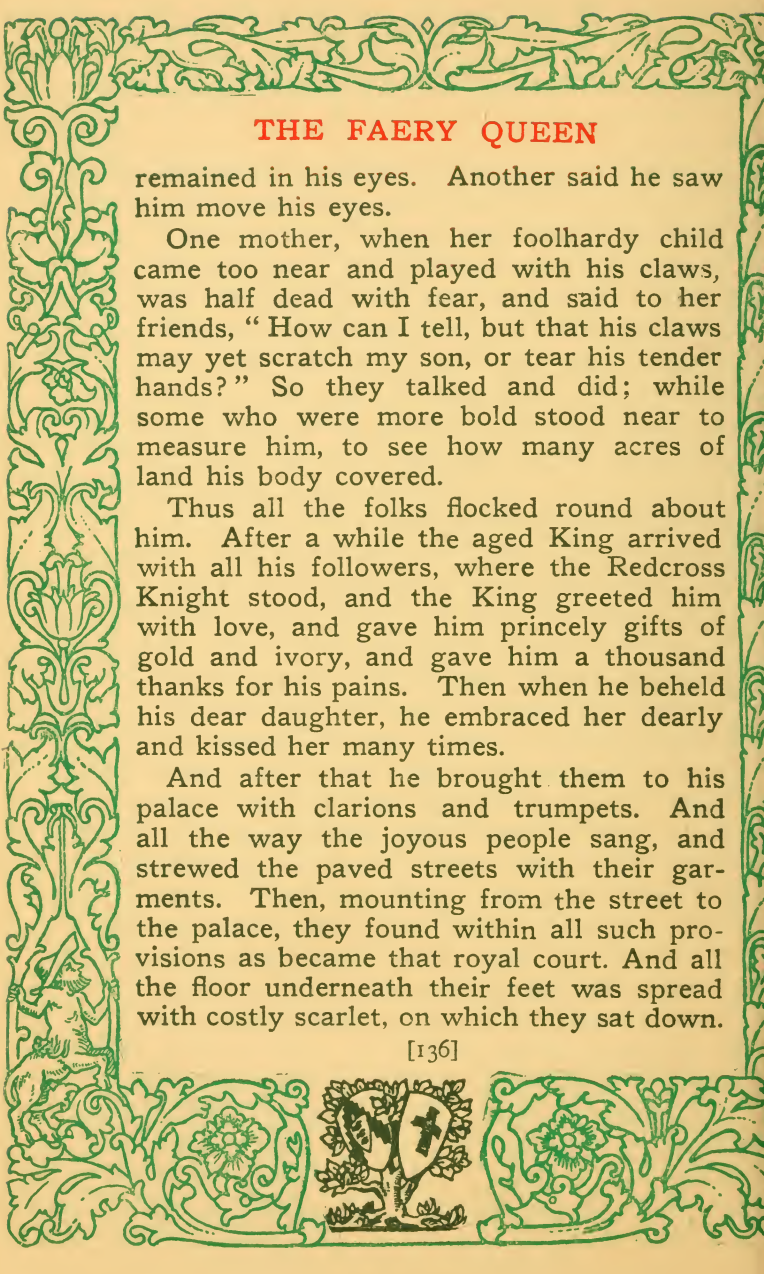
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ish mirth, and sung to the maidens' sounding timbrels' joyous lay in well-tuned notes, making all the way delightful music, until they came where the fair virgin, Una, stood. And then they wrestled, some ran, some bathed in the crystal flood. So she beheld those maidens' merriment with cheerful face. When they came to her, they bent themselves humbly to the ground, adoring her by an honorable name. Then they set a green garland on her head, and crowned her half in earnest and half in sport, so that she seemed what she was, a goodly maiden Queen.

And after all, many ran to see the face of that victorious man, whom all wondered at as if he were sent from heaven, and they gazed upon him with gaping mouths. But when they came where that dead Dragon lay, stretched on the ground in monstrous size, the sight dismayed them with fear, nor did they dare approach near enough to touch him. Some feared and some fled; some pretended to be afraid. One that would seem wiser than the rest warned them not to touch the beast for fear some lingering life might remain within him, or in some hidden nest might lurk little dragons. Another said that sparkling fire yet

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remained in his eyes. Another said he saw him move his eyes.

One mother, when her foolhardy child came too near and played with his claws, was half dead with fear, and said to her friends, "How can I tell, but that his claws may yet scratch my son, or tear his tender hands?" So they talked and did; while some who were more bold stood near to measure him, to see how many acres of land his body covered.

Thus all the folks flocked round about him. After a while the aged King arrived with all his followers, where the Redcross Knight stood, and the King greeted him with love, and gave him princely gifts of gold and ivory, and gave him a thousand thanks for his pains. Then when he beheld his dear daughter, he embraced her dearly and kissed her many times.

And after that he brought them to his palace with clarions and trumpets. And all the way the joyous people sang, and strewed the paved streets with their garments. Then, mounting from the street to the palace, they found within all such provisions as became that royal court. And all the floor underneath their feet was spread with costly scarlet, on which they sat down.

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Why need I tell of this feast, in which there was nothing riotous? Why need I tell of the dainty dishes, or the courtly train? My pages cannot contain all that was true of those royal princes' state. Then when they had quenched their appetites with meats and drinks of every kind, the ancient King asked of the Knight an account of his sad perils and strange adventures which had befallen him in his travels. And he with grave utterance told all his experience from point to point.

Great pleasure, mixed with pity, did that King and Queen show, while they heard his adventures. Often they lamented his luckless state; often they blamed unkind fortune, that heaped on him so many sorrows. And all the while salt tears bedewed his hearers' cheeks.

Then said that royal father, "Dear son, great have been the perils which you have borne from first to last in your enterprise, which I know not whether to praise or pity more. For I think, no living man was ever so distressed in a sea of dangers. But since now you have arrived at shore, let us plan means for ease and rest."

"Ah, dearest lord," said then the doughty Knight, "I may not yet think of ease or



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rest, for by my oath I am bound at once after this adventure to return back to the Fairy Queen and to serve her for six years in war against the proud heathen king, her foe. Therefore I cannot rest until I have fulfilled my vow."

"Unhappy is that hard necessity," said he. "This troubles my peace. Nor can I justly speak against the same. But since you cannot unloose that bond, for vows should not be vain, as soon as those six years are over, you shall return here once more to accomplish the marriage between you and my daughter. Which, for my part, I am anxious to fulfill, as I proclaimed throughout the world that whoever killed that most deformed monster should have my only daughter for his wife and be the heir to my kingdom. Therefore since you have done this, I yield to you both daughter and kingdom."

Then he called forth his fair daughter, the fairest Una, who proceeded forth with sad, sober face, as bright as the morning star appearing out of the east. As fair and fresh as flowers in May was she, for she had laid her black robe aside, with which she had hidden her heavenly beauty, while she was on her weary journey. And on her

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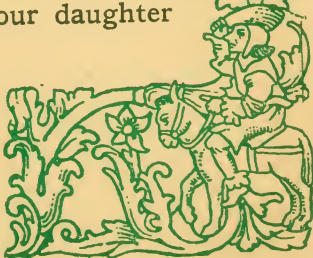
now she wore a lily-white garment, without spot, that seemed to be woven of silk and silver.

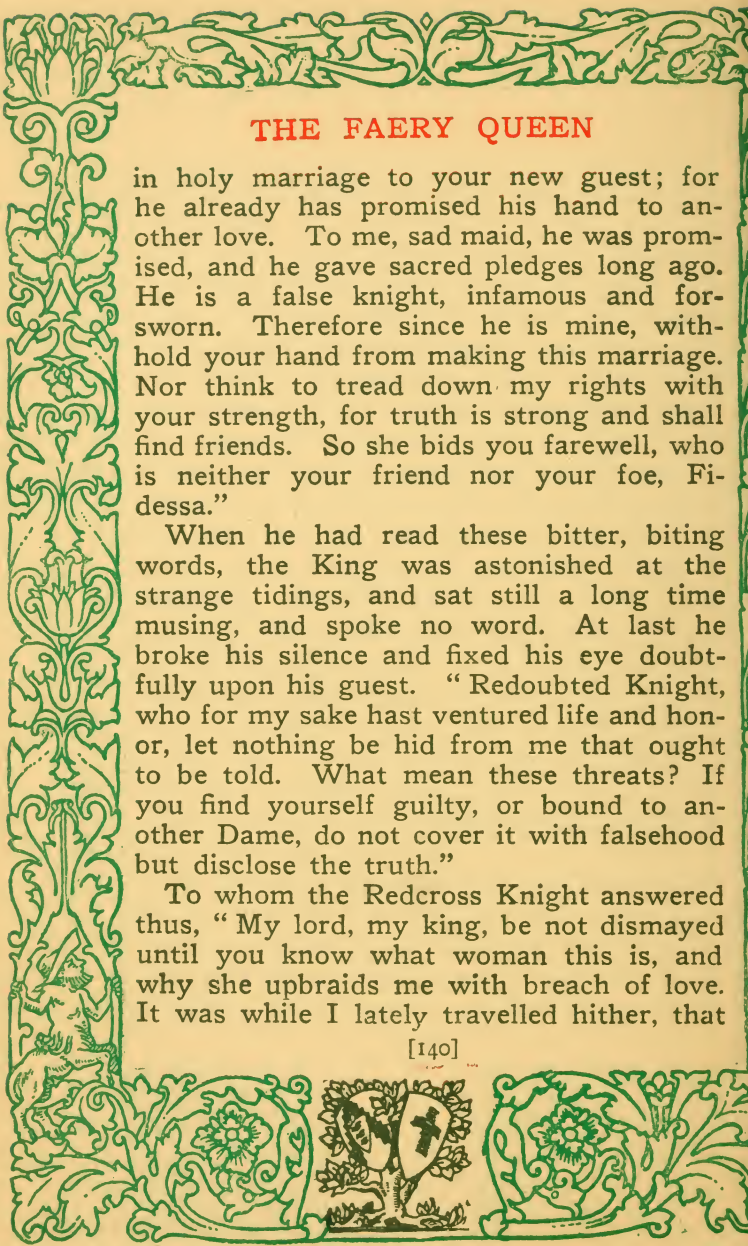
The blazing brightness of her beauty, and the glorious light of her sunshiny face were more than I can describe. Her own dear Knight, though he had been used to see her daily, wondered much at the heavenly sight. He had often seen her fair, but never so fairly dressed. Thus when she came into the King's presence, she made an humble bow to her sire, which became her well and added grace to her. And then she was about to speak.

But before she had spoken, a messenger with letters came running in with flying speed. All in the open hall stood amazed at the suddenness of his appearance, and wondered at his breathless haste. But he would stay for nothing till he had come to the King. There falling flat with great humility, he kissed the ground, and then taking what he had in his hands, he began to read.

"To thee, most mighty king of fair Eden, the woeful daughter and forsaken heir of the great Emperor of all the West sends her greetings in these sad lines. She bids you be advised, before you link your daughter

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in holy marriage to your new guest; for he already has promised his hand to another love. To me, sad maid, he was promised, and he gave sacred pledges long ago. He is a false knight, infamous and forsworn. Therefore since he is mine, withhold your hand from making this marriage. Nor think to tread down my rights with your strength, for truth is strong and shall find friends. So she bids you farewell, who is neither your friend nor your foe, Fiddessa."

When he had read these bitter, biting words, the King was astonished at the strange tidings, and sat still a long time musing, and spoke no word. At last he broke his silence and fixed his eye doubtfully upon his guest. "Redoubted Knight, who for my sake hast ventured life and honor, let nothing be hid from me that ought to be told. What mean these threats? If you find yourself guilty, or bound to another Dame, do not cover it with falsehood but disclose the truth."

To whom the Redcross Knight answered thus, "My lord, my king, be not dismayed until you know what woman this is, and why she upbraids me with breach of love. It was while I lately travelled hither, that



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I strayed out of my way through strange perils that would take all this day to tell. There I found, or rather was found by this false woman called Fidessa, who is, indeed, the most false Duessa. She was richly dressed to deceive weaker sight, and by her wicked art she brought me to her wicked will, and betrayed me to my foe."

Then stepped forth the goodly royal Maid, Una, and prostrating herself low on the ground, she spoke with sober face, "O, pardon me, my sovereign lord, while I show the secret treasons which I know to have been wrought by that false sorceress. She, only she, it was who threw this gentle Knight into such great distress. And now it seems that she has bribed this false messenger to bring these false letters to work new woe, by breaking the bond between us. She has used this false footman, clothed with simplicity, whom, if you wish to discover plainly, I think you will find to be Archimago, the falsest man alive."

The king was secretly moved at her speech, and with sudden indignation bade them seize that messenger. At once the guards seized that false traitor and truly found him to be Archimago; and then they bound him, and they laid him low in a deep

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dungeon, fastened hand and foot with iron chains.

And when the King's anger was pacified, he began to renew the thought of the marriage. And he at once, without more delay, tied his dear daughter with sacred rites and vows to the Knight forever. He knitted the knot with his own two hands, that none but death could ever divide them. With his own hands he kindled the sacramental fires and sprinkled the holy water.

Then they began to sprinkle all the posts with wine, and made great feasts. They perfumed all with frankincense, and precious odors brought from far. All the while sweet music played with curious skill warbling notes. During which there was a heavenly noise heard sounding pleasantly through the place as if it had been an angel's voice. Yet no one knew whence that heavenly sound came.

Great joy was made that day among old and young, and a solemn feast was proclaimed through the land. Thrice happyman the Knight thought himself, being possessed of the hand and heart of his Lady. And always when his eyes beheld her his heart seemed to melt with pleasure. He there long enjoyed her presence and sweet

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company. No wicked envy, nor wild jealousy was able to annoy him.

Yet while swimming in the sea of bliss, he never forgot what he had sworn—that in case he should destroy that monstrous beast, he would return to his Fairy Queen. Which he shortly did, leaving Una for the time in the care of her loving and happy parents.



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